Confession of Sins

By:

Hadrat Muslihul Ummat Hadrat Maulānā Shāh Wasiyyullāh Sāhib

With an Addendum:

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF MISTAKES

By:

Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Qamar az-Zamān Sāhib

Translated by:

Moulānā Mahomed Mahomedy

MAKTABA DARUL HUDA

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PUBLISHER’S NOTE

By the grace and help of Allāh ﷾, Maktabah Dār al-Maʿārif Ilāhābād has the honour of publishing many books, biographies, *mawāʿiẕ* (books of admonition), etc. which the *ʿulamā’* and people who have interest in these subjects expressed their appreciation and provided encouragement to the people of the Maktabah with their lofty opinions. May Allāh ﷾ reward them.

Al-ẖamdulillāh, at present, important books on the subject of *tas̱awwuf* are in the processes of simplification, clarification, writing or printing. May Allāh ﷾ enable us to convey all these books to the *ummah* and make them useful, and may He inspire us to continue in this task. Āmīn.

The book before you is actually a collection of the book, *Iʿtirāf-e-Dhunūb*, of Mus̱liẖul Ummat H̱aḏrat Maulānā Shāh Was̱īyullāh S̱āẖib *quddisa sirruhu*, and *Iʿtirāf-e-Qus̱ūr*, of my respected and honourable father. Both books show a path which would convey servants close to Allāh ﷾. When a servant presents himself before Allāh ﷾, acknowledges his sins and mistakes, seeks forgiveness with remorse, and cries before Allāh ﷾, He brings him close to Himself.

In like manner, when a person displays shortcomings in fulfilling the rights of his beloved ones, relatives and friends, and seeks their pardon by admitting his mistakes, he becomes acceptable in their sight.

Both books have accumulated strange and astonishing stories of acknowledgement of sins and mistakes from the lives of the Prophets, *auliyā'*, *'ulamā'* and righteous people. *Inshā Allāh*, these will prove to be guiding lights to those who are treading the path of the Ṯarīqah and are seeking the road to Paradise.

All readers are requested to make *du'ā'* for my honourable father for Allāh ﷻ to bless him with long life with good health and well-being, and bestow him with even more inspiration to spread the teachings of the Sharī'ah, the Sunnah, and to further elucidate and explain the teachings of *tasawwuf* and *sulūk*.

I conclude by making *du'ā'* to Allāh ﷻ to reward all those who assisted us either with their knowledge or wealth, and to make this book a means to bring about a change in our lives. Āmīn.

Muhammad 'Abdullāh Qamar az-Zamān Ilāhābādī
Servant of Maktabah Dār al-Ma'ārif Ilāhābād
Rabī' ath-Thānī 1429 A.H.

APPRAISAL

Hadrat Maulānā ʻAbdullāh Sāhib Kāpaudrī[1]

A famous Arabic saying states:

الإنسان مركب من الخطأ والنسيان

“Every human commits a mistake and an oversight.”

But when he adopts humility and submission, and admits and acknowledges his sin and error, he becomes the beloved of Allāh.

The Qur’ān relates numerous stories of the Prophets in various places. We learn from these stories that the moment the Prophets

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[1] Hadrat Maulānā ʻAbdullāh Sāhib Kāpaudrī Gujarātī is – *mā shā Allāh* – from among the senior *ʻulamā’* possessing both intellectual and practical excellences. He was the rector of Jāmiʻah Falāh-e-Dārayn, Tadkeshwar, Gujarat for quite some time. Presently he alternately lives in his hometown, Kāpaudrā district Surat, and in Toronto, Canada, with his son.
His appraisal of the books, *Iʻtirāf-e-Dhunūb* and *Iʻtirāf-e-Qusūr*, brought much joy to me, and it is sufficient testimony to their authenticity. *Inshā Allāh*, it will be a cause of additional benefit to the masses and the learned. This is most certainly not difficult for Allāh. (Muhammad Qamar az-Zamān Ilāhābādī)

committed a minor mistake and did something which was not the best option (*khilāf-e-aulā*), they immediately humbled themselves in Allāh's court, acknowledged their error, and sought His forgiveness. Incidents from the lives of great Prophets عليهم السلام like Hadrat Ādam عليه السلام, Hadrat Yūnus عليه السلام, Hadrat Mūsā عليه السلام and others make reference to this. It was this very submission of theirs which enabled them to achieve lofty ranks.

When man commits a sin and does not admit it, and does not express any sorrow over his mistakes and errors, then he includes himself in the band of Satan. The Leader of all past and future generations, our Master Muhammad Rasūlullāh ﷺ taught the *ummah* through his *duʿās* (supplications) how he used to express his humility and submission before Allāh سبحانه وتعالى by admitting his errors and mistakes on every occasion. He taught the *ummah* to obtain Allāh's سبحانه وتعالى pleasure by expressing its submission and servitude to Him.

Our present tribulation-filled era is overpowered by materialism. Our elders have compiled valuable books directing our attention to this important Sunnah. Hadrat Maulānā Shāh Wasīyullāh Sāhib Ilāhābādī compiled an excellent book on this subject, titled, *Iʿtirāf-e-Dhunūb*. This book ought to be studied repeatedly. Hadrat Maulānā Qamar az-Zamān Sāhib *dāmat barakātuhum* compiled an addendum to it, titled, *Iʿtirāf-e-Qusūr*, in which he relates inspiring stories and incidents of acknowledgement of

mistakes from the lives of the Prophets ﷺ, the Sahābah ﷺ, senior *'ulamā'* and righteous elders.

Both books ought to be formally read in the assemblies of Muslims. One lesson after another ought to be read after the *'asr salāh* to the students so that they develop humility and servitude, and attain proximity to Allāh ﷻ in this way.

The following lines of Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Ahmad Partāb Garhī *rahimahullāh* are most excellent, and cause the hearts to tremble:

"At times I experience the joy of having obeyed Allāh ﷻ. At times I have to acknowledge my sins. I am constantly mindful of the thing which the angel is not aware of. This is the beginning and end of those who truly love Allāh ﷻ. O Ahmad [referring to himself] who possesses nothing. I acknowledge my sins."

May Allāh ﷻ honour the services of Hadrat Maulānā Qamar az-Zamān Sāhib *dāmat barakātuhum* with acceptance. His presence is a great bounty during this era in which there is a dearth of senior personalities. May Allāh ﷻ give him long life with good health and well-being. Āmīn.

Was salām
'Abdullāh Kāpaudrī, *may Allāh pardon him.*
13 Jumādā al-Ūlā 1429 A.H./19 May 2008.

CONGRATULATORY WORDS

Hadrat al-Hāj al-Hāfiz Dr. Salāh ad-Dīn Sāhib Siddīqī[1] *mudda zilluhu* – senior *khalīfah* of

[1] The respected Doctor Sāhib was born in Behtarī, district Ghāzīpūr. He spent his early life with his father, Inspector Najm ad-Dīn Sāhib, in the areas of Deoband, Sahāranpūr and Thānabhawan. This enabled him to meet the *ʿulamā'* and *mashā'ikh* of the area. In fact, he even studied a few Arabic texts in Dār al-ʿUlūm Deoband. He would regularly visit Hadrat Hakīm al-Ummah *rahimahullāh*. In fact, he would frequent his house as well. He then qualified from the medical college at Ilāhābād.
When Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* came to Ilāhābād in 1957, he remained in his constant company until the every end, and served and attended to him until his demise.
A short while after he established a bond with Hadrat Muslihul Ummat, he received a written permission (*ijāzah*) for *bayʿah*. This is the bounty of Allāh ﷻ which He bestows on whomever He wills.
Mā shā Allāh, he played a special role in purchasing Bakhshī Bāzār Raushan Bāgh, house no. 23. In like manner, he also had the honour of initiating the publication of the periodical, *Maʿrifat-e-Haqq*. The blessing of this continues to this day. In short, Hadrat Doctor Sāhib benefited tremendously from the bestowal of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh*. The following couplets composed by him are testimony to this:
"I am able to see Allāh ﷻ in everything. This is by virtue of the Shaykh-e-Zaman Shāh Wasīyyullāh. He filled my heart with a continuous flow of effulgence. What wisdom and intelligence!"
Muhammad Qamar az-Zamān Ilāhābādī
13 Rajab 1429 A.H.
Idārah Maʿārif Muslihul Ummat

Hadrat Muslihul Ummat and editor of *Maʿrifat-e-Haqq*, Ilāhābād

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم، نحمده ونصلي على رسوله الكريم

This insignificant servant, Salāh ad-Dīn Ahmad, congratulates Maulānā Qamar az-Zamān for his intention to publish the book, *Iʿtirāf-e-Dhunūb*, of Shaykh-e-Zaman Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh*. He also undertook the task of simplifying it. May Allāh ﷾ enable him to complete this task and may He accept it from him. Āmīn.

Mā shā Allāh, apart from writing and compiling books, the Maulānā is also occupied with education and purification both within the country and abroad, and the seekers are welcoming him. May Allāh ﷾ inspire him to do more.

The Maulānā lives opposite the Jāmiʿ Musjid Wasīyyābād and performs his *fajr salāh* in this musjid. He remains seated in the northerly room of the musjid until *ishrāq* (about fifteen minutes after sunrise). Maulwī Sayf ar-Rahmān Sāhib made arrangements for this . Consequently, it has become easy for the masses to meet the Maulānā. Moreover, the Maulānā also conducts *tafsīr* lessons on Thursdays after the *fajr salāh*, which the seekers attend.

I observed the Maulānā's capabilities and acumen from the days of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat

rahimahullāh. These capabilities earned him Hadrat Muslihul Ummat's *rahimahullāh* love and affection. Hadrat was really thinking of the Maulānā on one occasion and uttered the following couplets spontaneously:

"I am thinking of you, O Qamar az-Zamān! O my special beloved, O my spirit and soul! May your bestowal spread far and wide. O you who are wise in speech, wise in understanding, and wise in intellect."

After Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* passed away, he placed his trust in Allāh ﷻ and began issuing both written and verbal permissions for *khilāfah* in the four *silsilahs* (spiritual chains, spiritual lineages).

May Allāh ﷻ enable him to render more services, may He accept his services, and may He bestow even more progress to the sciences of *tasawwuf* and the *silsilahs* of the Sufis through him. Āmīn.

Was salām
Salāh ad-Dīn Ahmad Siddīqī
20 February 2008 A.H.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF SINS AND A CHANGE IN BELIEFS

Janāb Mukarram al-H̲āj Anīs Ah̲mad Parkhās̲wī S̲āh̲ib

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

Before I could study the book, *Iʿtirāf-e-Dhunūb*, my consciousness of Allāh’s ﷾ divinity was like a fine line on the slate of my mind. But the greatness of the Prophets ﵇ and the *auliyā’* of Allāh ﷾, their influences, and belief in their fulfilment of needs and removal of hardships had completely pervaded my heart and mind. It never crossed my mind that these personalities must have thought about the Hereafter while living in this world, and had made it their regular practice to cry in the court of Allāh ﷾.

My spiritual master, H̲ad̲rat Maulānā Shāh Was̲īyyullāh S̲āh̲ib *rah̲imahullāh*, sourced authentic books and narrations to compile this book in which he relates stories from the lives of the Prophets ﵇ and *auliyā’* which portray their submission in Allāh’s court and crying before Him. He proves that the closer a servant gets to Allāh ﷾, the more fearful he becomes of Him. Since the recognition of Allāh ﷾ and close proximity to Him is enjoyed the most by the Prophets ﵇, they are the ones who fear Him the most. The Prophets ﵇ made *duʿā’* to Allāh ﷾ like a person who cries before Him for having

committed a sin. The pious servants of Allāh ﷿ and the *auliyā'* also took lesson from the Sunnah of Rasūlullāh ﷺ and made crying before Allāh ﷿ the salient feature of their life because this is the way to obtain Allāh's pleasure. The reader can gauge the effect which the chapter on crying had on me from the following couplets:

"I made the thing which is the exact Sunnah of the Prophets ﵇ part and parcel of my life. My acknowledgement of my sins came to my rescue."

I got the true recognition of the Prophets ﵇ and *auliyā'* from reading this book. At the same time, I also realized Allāh's ﷿ greatness and His absolute independence, and my heart began trembling out of Allāh's ﷿ fear.

I commenced reading this book with sincerity and noble intentions, and so, the benefit which I derived from it and the changes it brought to my beliefs can be gauged from the following lines written by myself:

"Allāh ﷿ is the one who sustains this world, and the One who fulfils the needs of everyone. He alone created everything, and He alone removes the problems of all – whether he is a *walī*, Prophet, martyr, or a *mujāhid*. In short, the entire creation belongs to Him, and He is the Lord of all."

While presenting the stories of the Sahābah ﵃, Hadrat *rahimahullāh* touches on various

enlightening and admonitory topics related to *tasawwuf* and the Tarīqah. I was most affected by this section and I quote the following couplet which could probably be referred to as the essence of the book. Please pardon me for quoting it:

"Submitting and humbling oneself is the greatest treasure. Do not ask for *kashf* (expositions), greatness, nor *karāmat* (supernatural feats)."

May Allāh ﷻ reward and elevate the ranks of my shaykh, Hadrat Maulānā Shāh Wasīyyullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh*, through whom I learnt the correct *Dīn* and joined the *ahl-e-haqq* (those on the true path). May Allāh ﷻ keep me steadfast on *Dīn* until the last breath which I take. Āmīn.

This insignificant servant had the good fortune of expressing this wish and hope in a couplet in the form of a *duʿā'*:

"O Anīs! May you remain steadfast on every occasion on the true *Dīn*, even if you have to bear every trial and tribulation on this journey."

When my *murshid*, Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Qamar az-Zamān Sāhib *dāmat barakātuhum* decided to republish Hadrat Muslihul Ummat Maulānā Shāh Wasīyyullāh Sāhib's *rahimahullāh* book, *Iʿtirāf-e-Dhunūb*, I think it was the very next day when he said to us: "A thought has come to my heart; I think a book titled, *Iʿtirāf-e-Qusūr*, be appended to the original book. It will be very

beneficial, and its themes will be along the lines of the original.” Hadrat had written a few pages of *Iʿtirāf-e-Qusūr* and read them to us as an example of what the subject matter will be. When I heard him reading it, I though to myself that it is divinely inspired and also an explanation and commentary of *Iʿtirāf-e-Dhunūb*.

I feel I should mention one important point here: Hadrat Maulānā ʿAbd ar-Rahmān Sāhib Jāmī *rahimahullāh* needs no introduction. He said to me: “Anīs Bhāi! I am ill and there is a lot of work to be done. I have therefore made an intention to publish all of Hadrat’s *rahimahullāh* teachings, statements (*malfūzāt*), etc. without taking any consideration of their sequence. Later on, some servant of Allāh ﷾ will collect all these scattered pearls and publish them in a systematic and well-sequenced manner.”

Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* used to say occasionally: “My voice is gone so weak that whatever I am saying cannot be heard beyond this door. But Allāh ﷾ has the power to convey it throughout the world.” Consequently, Hadrat’s *rahimahullāh* knowledge and teachings are being conveyed through Hadrat Maulānā Qamar az-Zamān Sāhib *dāmat barakātuhum.*

I have learnt something else which has brought even more joy to me, viz. Hadrat Maulānā intends collating Hadrat Muslihul Ummat’s *rahimahullāh* statements and words which are scattered in the periodical, *Maʿrifat-e-Haqq wa Wasīyyatul ʿIrfān*,

and publishing them in a simplified and explanatory style under the title, *Maʿārif Mus̲lih̲ul Ummat*. *Al-h̲amdulillāh*, this work has commenced. May Allāh ﷾ enable it to reach completion and may He convey the teachings of H̲ad̲rat Mus̲lih̲ul Ummat *rah̲imahullāh* throughout the world. Āmīn.

May Allāh ﷾ bestow long life to H̲ad̲rat and enable us to continue benefiting from him. Āmīn.

Anīs Ah̲mad Anīs Parkhās̲wī
14 Rajab al-Murajjab 1429 A.H.

IMPRESSIONS

Maulānā Muftī Jamīl Ahmad Sāhib Nadhīrī
(member Majlis-e-ʿIlmī All India Fiqh Academy, New Delhi)

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

نحمده ونصلي على رسوله الكريم

Sins and mistakes are part and parcel of man's make up and temperament, and their commitment by any human is not surprising. What is certainly surprising is when a person does not acknowledge his sins and admit his mistakes. By becoming entrapped in pride and arrogance he neither repents for his sins nor does he admit them.

Falling into pride and arrogance, and refusing to acknowledge and admit one's mistakes is the trait of Satan and his followers. Humility, submission, repentance over sins, turning to Allāh سبحانه وتعالى, and acknowledging one's mistakes is the hallmark of the Prophets عليهم السلام and the righteous servants of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى.

Muslihul Ummat Hadrat Maulānā Shāh Wasīyyullāh Sāhib Ilāhābādī *rahimahullāh* has fully explained and expounded on this point in the present book, *Iʿtirāf-e-Dhunūb*. It has been further explained and simplified by my respected shaykh, Hadrat Maulānā Shāh Muhammad Qamar az-Zamān Sāhib Ilāhābādī *dāmat*

fuyūduhum, in his addendum titled, *Iʿtirāf-e-Qusūr*. Both these collections are excellent guides for those treading the path, and are easy and simple ways of reaching the destination of *sulūk*.

Both books do not confine themselves to a mere mention of acknowledgement of sins and admission of mistakes. Rather, they present practical examples from the lives and actions of the noble Prophets عليهم السلام, great Messengers عليهم السلام, and the righteous personalities of the *ummah*. This is the actual purpose. Included among them are examples from the life of the Leader of the Prophets and Messengers, Hadrat Muhammad ﷺ.

The lives of many people in the past changed by virtue of acknowledging sins and mistakes. And now, the addendum, *Iʿtirāf-e-Qusūr*, of my Hadrat, will effect a fresh revolution in the lives of many. Hearts will change, and the minds and conditions will become ready to change – *inshā Allāh*.

Although I am not qualified to pen my impressions on the works of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* and of my Hadrat *dāmat barakātuhum*, I consider it an honour to fulfil my Hadrat's order to pen a few lines.

اَللّٰهُمَّ تَقَبَّلْ مِنَّا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ السَّمِيْعُ الْعَلِيْمُ، وَتُبْ عَلَيْنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيْمُ

O Allāh, accept it from us. Surely You are all-hearing, all-knowing. Inspire us to repent, surely You are all-relenting, all-merciful.

Jamīl Ahmad Nadhīrī, *may Allāh pardon him*
Jāmiʿah ʿArabīyyah ʿAyn al-Islām,
Nawādah, Mubārakpūr, Aʿzamgarh, U.P.
14 Safar al-Muzaffar 1429 A.H., Friday
Presently at Khānqāh Hadrat Murshidī *dāmat barakātuhum*, Ilāhābād.

INTRODUCTION

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

نحمده ونصلي على رسوله الكريم

This entire collection is the subject of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat's *rahimahullāh* talks which he presented in Ramadān al-Mubārak 1383 A.H. It was collated by Hadrat Maulānā ʿAbd ar-Rahmān Sāhib Jāmī *rahimahullāh* in a systematic manner and took the shape of a book. Before this – in Ramadān al-Mubārak 1382 A.H., Hadrat had presented talks on the recitation of the Qur'ān. This unworthy servant arranged all these talks in a particular sequence and read every letter of this collection to Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh*. Hadrat was most pleased with it and said: "This is a book through which many people will become *Sāhib-e-nisbat* (a person having close proximity with Allāh ﷿)." This book was published under the title, *Tilāwat-e-Qur'ān* (the recitation of the Qur'ān).

The same applies to the book, *Iʿtirāf-e-Dhunūb*. If it is studied carefully and practised upon – *inshā Allāh* – the way will become clear, *sulūk* will become easy for the person, and he will reach his destination. Inspiration is from Allāh ﷿ alone.

A very pleasing thing about this is that Hadrat Muslihul Ummat Maulānā Shāh Wasīyyullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* named this book:

الإعتراف والإستغفار من الذنوب من أعظم سنن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم

"Acknowledgement of and seeking forgiveness for sins is one of the greatest Sunnahs of the Prophet ﷺ."

The title itself encompasses all the themes of this book. Obviously, none can describe the themes of a book better than the author himself. There is a famous saying: "A written work is an exposition of the condition of the author." This will manifest itself from the themes of the book.

Reason for compilation

I remember the reason for explaining these themes, viz. the following verse was presented:

فَاعْتَرَفُوْا بِذَنْبِهِمْ فَسُحْقًا لأَصْحَابِ السَّعِيْرِ (سورة الملك، ١٣)

"The unbelievers will admit their sins. So curse to the inmates of Hell." (Sūrah al-Mulk, verse 13)

The unbelievers will admit their sins in the Hereafter but it will be of no benefit whatsoever to them. Instead, Allāh ﷻ will repulse them and invoke curses on them. Rasūlullāh ﷺ, regarding whom Hadrat 'Ā'ishah *radiyallāhu 'anhā* said: كان خلقه القرآن (his character was a physical manifestation of the Qur'ān), was quite affected by this admonition which states that the unbelievers will neither benefit from nor be

rewarded for their acknowledgement of their sins. Instead, they will be cursed and repulsed. May Allāh ﷻ protect us.

This is why Rasūlullāh ﷺ used the same word in his *du'ā'* to Allāh ﷻ and said:

أنا المقر والمعترف بذنبي

"I admit and acknowledge my sins."

In so doing, Rasūlullāh ﷺ conveys this message: O Allāh! Although I have been blessed with the bounty of *'ismat* (total protection from sins), I acknowledge my sins and I am not like the unbelievers who remained adamant and arrogant in their sins while in this world, and began admitting and acknowledging them only when they saw the punishment in the Hereafter. Their acknowledgement will be of no use to them. Instead, they will by disgraced and humiliated by Allāh's ﷻ curses. May Allāh ﷻ protect us.

The importance of this admonitory subject is self-evident, and Hadrat Muslihul Ummat Maulānā Shāh Wasīyullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* (who was a true inheritor of Rasūlullāh's ﷺ internal conditions) thought about it, was affected by it, and therefore explained it throughout the month of Ramadān.

Internal condition

The following incidents display Hadrat's internal condition:

1. Hadrat would quote the following couplet on certain occasions:

"We are like *seekh kabābs* which are constantly turning sides over a fire. When one sides gets burnt, we turn over onto the other side."

One can gauge the level of fear for the Hereafter from this.

2. At times he would quote the following lines. I was present in Hadrat's room while he walking up and down and reciting these lines. The meaning of which is:

"O hāfiz! Now that you are gone old, come out of this trap. All this drunkenness and lust may have been acceptable when you were young. But it is totally unacceptable in your old age."

3. On one occasion, Hadrat Muslihul Ummat had a few teaspoons of ice cream and then gave it to his grandson, saying: "Here, you eat it now because if I were to eat any more, I will be committing a sin."

Glory to Allāh! Not only do these incidents display his fear of sins, but his abstention from them and remaining on his guard from committing them.

This is why I think that H̲ad̲rat's speech – whether verbal or written – has a great impact. And this is acknowledged by all. Just recently, I had the opportunity of collating three of H̲ad̲rat's speeches (hypocrisy, pride, anger), simplifying and explaining them, and publishing them in a book titled, *T̲ahārat-e-Qalb* (purity of the heart). People are expressing its limitless benefit and impact. Maulānā Ah̲mad Nas̲r Banārasī expressed the profound benefit of this book, requested several copies of it, and distributed it among his associates. His thoughts about it are expressed in the following letter:

Letter from Maulānā Ahmad Nasr Banārasī

Murshid ʿĀlī Maqām H̲ad̲rat Makhdūm Mukarram Ustādh Muʿaz̲z̲am *dāmat barakātuhum*

As-salāmu ʿalaykum wa rah̲matullāhi wa barakātuh

Al-h̲amdulillāh, I am well. I hope H̲ad̲rat is feeling well. I returned safely and soundly after meeting H̲ad̲rat. I could not write to H̲ad̲rat immediately because I had to go to Bengal. May Allāh ﷻ enable H̲ad̲rat to live for a long time among us, and may He spread H̲ad̲rat's bestowals and blessings far and wide. Āmīn.

When I was departing, H̲ad̲rat gave me a copy of *T̲ahārat-e-Qalb*. This book is a priceless treasure for the rectification of the heart. This is especially so with regard to the chapters on ostentation and

hypocrisy. I feel like reading it again and again. I not only held to the following text of *Durr-e-Mukhtār*, but clung firmly to it:

والتذكير على المقابر

"One finds admonition [and a reminder] at the graveside."

I read it several times for the purpose of my own rectification and, with the same purpose, I quoted it in two assemblies in Bengal. I derived one special benefit by doing this, viz. at the time of delivering my talk, I was able to pay special attention to purifying my intention. Furthermore, the illnesses of ostentation and hypocrisy which I feel are found within me can only be removed through Allāh's ﷿ grace and the *du'ā's* of pious personalities like Hadrat.

After studying this subject in the book, I became concerned about self-introspection, and my heart repeatedly directed itself towards rectification of my conditions. May Allāh ﷿ reward Hadrat for opening my eyes to this. The entire book is filled with a strange and unique spirituality, effulgence and attraction. And why should it not be so, after all, it was expressed by a high-ranking personality like Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* and penned by a sincere and honest transmitter like Hadrat!

I benefited tremendously from this book. May Allāh ﷿ continue elevating Hadrat Muslihul

Ummat’s rank, and may Hadrat’s pen continue aiding me against the evils of my soul and the plots of Satan. May Allāh ﷾ reward Hadrat with the best of rewards.

I now conclude my letter. Kindly remember me in Hadrat’s *duʿā’s* for Allāh ﷾ to rectify my conditions, give me a good death, and grant me total forgiveness. I am more in need of Hadrat’s *duʿā’s* than a thirsty person is for water.

That is all
Ahmad Nasr Banārasī, *may Allāh pardon him*
Servant of Madrasah and Khānqāh Imdādīyyah, Benaris.

I have heard that Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Rābiʿ Sāhib *mudda zilluhu* (present rector of Dār al-ʿUlūm Nadwatul ʿUlamā’, Lucknow) is also impressed by this book and had it read daily during the last Ramadān at Dā’irah Takīyyah Kalā, Rai Bareilly (the *khānqāh* of Hadrat Maulānā Abūl Hasan ʿAlī Nadwī *rahimahullāh* and his family). It is a source of honour and joy for me. May Allāh ﷾ send all its rewards to our Shaykh Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh*. May Allāh ﷾ enable us to not only practise on all his teachings, but to convey them far and wide. Āmīn.

In order to propagate Hadrat’s teachings, I established “Idārah Maʿārif Muslihul Ummat” at Dār-e-Saʿīd opposite Dār al-Maʿārif al-Islāmīyyah, Karelī. I have handed over the responsibility of

this to [my two sons], Maulwī Mahbūb Ahmad Qamar az-Zamān Nadwī and Maulwī Muhammad ʿUbaydullāh Qamar az-Zamān Nadwī. May Allāh ﷻ enable them to fulfil this responsibility. May Allāh ﷻ accept this institute and all its publications, and may He provide it with ease to achieve all its goals. Inspiration is from Allāh ﷻ alone.

Mā shā Allāh, the masses and the majority of level-headed learned people attested to Hadrat Muslihul Ummat's piety and lofty status, and still attest to it. A *walī* is defined as:

الولي هو العارف بالله تعالى وصفاته بحسب ما يمكن المواظب على الطاعات المجتنب عن المعاصي المعرض عن الانهماك في اللذات والشهوات. (نبراس، ٤٧٦).

"A *walī* is one who recognizes Allāh's essence and attributes as much as possible, remains adherent to acts of obedience, abstains from acts of disobedience, and does not become engrossed in futile pleasures and desires."

Al-hamdulillāh, these qualities and signs were clearly visible in Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh*. I do not consider him to be totally innocent (*maʿsūm*) from sin, but I certainly believe he was protected from sin. Those who knew him from childhood narrate that they found him extremely vigilant against committing even minor sins. When it came to dealings and transactions, he would always follow the option which was

most cautious. This is testified by those who saw him.

This is why he would constantly emphasize on his associates to abstain from sins, and to engage in repentance and seeking forgiveness. He would also instruct them to read the following verse because the Qur'ān and Hadīth relate many merits of reading it.

لاَ إِلَهَ إِلاَّ أَنْتَ سُبْحَانَكَ إِنِّيْ كُنْتُ مِنَ الظَّالِمِيْنَ

"There is none worthy of worship except You. Glory to You. I was certainly from among the wrongdoers."

In like manner, my second shaykh, Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Ahmad Sāhib *rahimahullāh* also emphasised reading the above verse.

In short, Rasūlullāh ﷺ engaged in repentance (*taubah*), seeking forgiveness (*istighfār*), and acknowledgement of sin; and thereby presented a blessed example to the *ummah* so that it may also practise on this, as beautifully explained by Hadrat Muslihul Ummat Maulānā Shāh Wasīyyullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* in his talk.

This servant states that Sayyidunā Hadrat Ādam عليه السلام and Hadrat Hawwā' عليها السلام also followed this way when they committed an error of judgement. And this was taught to them by Allāh سبحانه وتعالى:

فَتَلَقَّى آدَمُ مِنْ رَبِّهِ كَلِمَاتٍ فَتَابَ عَلَيْهِ إِنَّهُ هُوَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيْمُ

"Then Ādam learnt from his Sustainer some words and Allāh turned to Him. Surely it is He who accepts repentance, the Merciful." (Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2: 37)

رَبَّنَا ظَلَمْنَا أَنْفُسَنَا وَإِنْ لَّمْ تَغْفِرْ لَنَا وَتَرْحَمْنَا لَنَكُوْنَنَّ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِيْنَ

"O our Sustainer! We have wronged ourselves. If You do not forgive us and have mercy on us, we will certainly be among the losers."

Similarly, when Hadrat Yūnus ﷺ committed an error in judgement, he uttered the following words in repentance:

لاَ إِلَهَ إِلاَّ أَنْتَ سُبْحَانَكَ إِنِّيْ كُنْتُ مِنَ الظَّالِمِيْنَ

"There is none worthy of worship except You. Glory to You. I was certainly from among the wrongdoers."

He received salvation from the fish's belly through this supplication, and Allāh ﷻ liked this glorification so much that He said:

وَكَذَلِكَ نُنْجِي الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ

In other words, anyone who acknowledges his wrong through these words, I will give him salvation from difficulties and calamities.

Similarly, Rasūlullāh ﷺ used to read the following *duʿā’* at the end of salāh:

أَللّٰهُمَّ إِنِّيْ ظَلَمْتُ نَفْسِيْ ظُلْمًا كَثِيْرًا...

In so doing, he would acknowledge and admit his mistakes. It was also his practice to say *astaghfirullāh* (I seek forgiveness from Allāh ﷾) three times after salāh.

Just ponder! Starting with Hadrat Ādam ﵇ and ending with Rasūlullāh ﷺ, all the Prophets ﵇ - despite being *maʿsūm* (divinely protected against sin) – when they did something which was not becoming of their lofty position or committed a judgemental error (which is not a sin according to the Sharīʿah), they considered it to be a sin, cried before Allāh ﷾, repented to Him, and sought His forgiveness.

We learn the high value and worth which this practice holds in Allāh’s sight. This is the way of gaining proximity and closeness to Him, and this is the way for the entire *ummah* to gain Allāh’s ﷾ pleasure and proximity. That is, a person must acknowledge and admit his mistakes, and abstain from pride and arrogance. It was through pride and arrogance which Satan and all the haughty persons after him were rejected by Allāh ﷾. O people of intelligence! Take admonition from this.

My heart was greatly affected after reading Hadrat Muslihul Ummat Shāh Wasīyyullāh Sāhib’s *rahimahullāh* book, *Iʿtirāf-e-Dhunūb*. My heart

desired to add to it the many incidents which I personally heard from him or which I read in books, and record them under the title *Iʿtirāf-e-Qusūr*, as an addendum to the present book. May Allāh ﷻ accept the addendum as He accepted the original, and may He make it a source of benefit for the *ummah*. Āmīn.

Muhammad Qamar az-Zamān Ilāhābādī
Bayt al-Adhkār, Wasīyyābād, Ilāhābād
15 Muharram al-Harām 1429 A.H.

SYNOPSIS OF THE BOOK

(please study this section before reading the book)

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

الحمد لله والصلوة والسلام على نبيه وعلى آله وصحبه المتخلقين بأخلاقه

My Hadrat Maulānā Shāh Wasīyyullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* proves in this collection titled, *Iʿtirāf-e-Dhunūb*, that acknowledgement of sins is an important and great Sunnah of Rasūlullāh ﷺ. He quotes Rasūlullāh's ﷺ *duʿā'*:

أنا المقر والمعترف بذنبي

"I admit and acknowledge my sins."

And follows it with a wonderful explanation of it, the essence of which is that this *duʿā'* demonstrates Rasūlullāh's ﷺ servitude, self-effacement, humility and submission. This way of Rasūlullāh ﷺ paved the way for all his spiritual progress, and he left it as a perfect example for the *ummah* and departed from this world. May Allāh ﷻ reward him on our behalf and on behalf of the entire *ummah*. The special servants of the *ummah*, viz. the Sahābah ﷺ, the Tābiʿīn and the righteous personalities adopted this Sunnah, traversed the levels of *sulūk* through it, and reached their goal.

This was the way of Rasūlullāh ﷺ and his followers. Now look at another way as well. It is the way of the cursed Satan which is based on obstinacy, rebellion, arrogance and self-conceit. This was the way trod by rebellious, proud, tyrannical and oppressive people who were destroyed. In so doing, they also joined Satan and became destined for Hell. May Allāh ﷻ protect us from it.

The destination of both groups is different. The destination of the first group is Paradise while that of the second group is Hell. This is clearly stated in a conversation between Paradise and Hell as described in a Hadīth. It states that Hell is for the proud people, while Paradise is for the weak and downtrodden.

عن أبي هريرة رضي الله عنه قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم تحاجت الجنة والنار فقالت النار أوثرت بالمتكبرين والمتجبرين، وقالت الجنة فمالي لا يدخلني إلا ضعفاء الناس وسقطهم وغرتهم، قال الله للجنة: إنما أنت رحمتي أرحم بك من أشاء من عبادي. وقال للنار: إنما أنت عذابي أعذب بك من أشاء من عبادي، ولكل واحدة منكما ملؤها فأما النار فلأمتلئ حتى يضع الله رجله تقول قط قط قط، فهنالك تمتلئ ويزوي بعضها إلى بعض، فلا يظلم الله من خلقه أحدا، وأما الجنة فإن الله ينشي له خلقا. (متفق عليه) (مشكوة شريف، باب خلق الجنة والنار، ص ٥٠٥).

Hadrat Abū Hurayrah ؓ narrates that Rasūlullāh ﷺ said: "Paradise and Hell engaged in a discussion. Hell said: 'I have been chosen for the

proud and rebellious people.’ Paradise said: ‘What can I say about my self? Only the weak, downtrodden, and those who are frowned upon will enter me.’ Allāh ﷾ said to Paradise: ‘You are a means for the manifestation of My mercy. I shall show mercy through you on whichever of My servants I will.’ Allāh ﷾ said to Hell: ‘You are a means for the manifestation of My wrath. I shall inflict punishment through you on whichever of My servants I will. And I shall certainly fill both of you.’ As for Hell, it will only get filled when Allāh ﷾ places His foot on it, and it will call out: ‘Enough, enough, enough.’ This is when Hell will get filled and all its different sections will be brought close together [and get compressed]. This means that Allāh ﷾ will not wrong any of His creation. As for Paradise, Allāh ﷾ will create new people [to fill it].”

H̲ad̲rat Mus̲lih̲ul Ummat *rah̲imahullāh* really stresses one point, viz. Muslims must be extremely wary of these evil traits which are found in the cursed Satan and his followers. If not, they will also be punished in the same way.

There was an ostentatious worshipper who did not really worship Allāh ﷾, but was a worshipper of his worship. He did not even get a whiff of the essence of his worship. He behaved in a proud and arrogant manner before a sinner and said some harsh things to him. This worshipper met a very evil fate. Shaykh Sa‘dī *rah̲imahullāh* relates this incident in detail in his *Bustān*. H̲ad̲rat Mus̲lih̲ul Ummat *rah̲imahullāh* explains it in an

excellent manner and warns the Muslims against such ostentatious worship. The reader is requested to study it carefully and take a lesson from it.

This insignificant servant added details to this subject under the title *Iʿtirāf-e-Qusūr*. Just as Rasūlullāh ﷺ acknowledged his sins to Allāh, he also acknowledged the apparent mistakes and shortcomings which he displayed in his dealings with people, apologized to the person, and asked him to pardon him. The Sahābah, the Tābiʿīn, the Tabaʿ Tābiʿīn, and the righteous personalities of this *ummah* also adhered strictly to this Sunnah. In so doing, they were honoured with Allāh's pleasure. Rasūlullāh ﷺ thus left this excellent Sunnah for the *ummah*.

Unfortunately, let alone the masses, even the learned are displaying shortcomings in this regard. Let us take just one example: In the past when a person intended to go for hajj, he would make it his duty to meet all his relatives and associates and seek their pardon for even the slightest disrespect he may have shown to them or for the smallest misappropriation of rights. The person would then proceed to perform hajj. But today, no one bothers about doing this in the least.

Similarly, relationships were upheld and honoured during family functions. This is because there was a concern to gain the pleasure of not only one's relatives and associates, but

even one's workers. But at present, there seems to be a general trend which gives the impression that people are going out of their way to displease even their elders. People speak out openly against their elders and criticize them. How, then, can they obtain their pleasure?!

Despite this, there are still some fortunate people (although they are in the minority) who honour their elders and show affection to their juniors. May Allāh ﷻ bestow the entire *ummah* to fulfil and uphold mutual rights so that this world could become an example of Paradise.

I now return to the original subject. I stress the importance of acknowledging one's sins, humility, servitude and submission; and state that these excellent qualities are the only way of correcting and strengthening one's bond with Allāh ﷻ, and strengthening the mutual ties among people. This is what will ensure Allāh's ﷻ special mercy in this world.

إِنَّ رَحْمَةَ اللهِ قَرِيْبٌ مِّنَ الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ

"Surely Allāh's mercy is close to those who do good."

Pay due regard to *du'ā'* while adopting outward means

During these times of corruption, one should certainly adopt outward means. But at the same time, he must continue beseeching Allāh ﷻ,

submitting before Him, making *duʿā’* to Him, and crying to Him. On the occasion of the battle of Badr, Rasūlullāh ﷺ made all possible war preparations, and together with this, he not only occupied himself in making *duʿā’* to Allāh ﷻ, but remained totally engrossed in it. Allāh’s ﷻ mercy then descended and Islam received its fundamental victory. Understand well, there can be differences with regard to adopting means, but there is unanimity with regard to the importance and need for *duʿā’*. No individual or group can deny it. If anyone does, he might as well bid farewell to his *īmān*. Someone said:

“O heart, create a yearning within you because such a yearning will really benefit you. The *duʿā’* which you make in the middle of the night will get rid off thousands of calamities.”

O Muslims! Strengthen your bond with Allāh ﷻ through *duʿā’* because there is a severe need for it. This will open the doors of victory and mercy, and we will be blessed with victory. A Sahābī رضي الله عنه asked Rasūlullāh ﷺ about salvation, and so, he advised him to do three things. One of them was to cry over his sins. The Hadīth reads:

عن عقبة بن عامر رضي الله عنه قال: لقيت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم فقلت: ما النجاة؟ فقال: أملك عليك لسانك، وليسعك بيتك، وابك على خطيئتك. (مشكوة، ص ٣١٤، ج ٢).

ʿUqbah ibn ʿĀmir رضي الله عنه narrates: “I met Rasūlullāh ﷺ and asked him: ‘Tell me what is the means of

salvation [in this world and in the Hereafter]?' He replied: 'Keep control of your tongue, let your house suffice for you, and cry over your sins.'"

We learn about the necessity and benefit of crying over one's sins from this Hadīth. Rasūlullāh ﷺ himself would be overcome by crying when reciting the Qur'ān or when listening to a Sahābī ؓ reciting it. The Sahābah ؓ, Tābi'īn and righteous personalities after him would also cry out of Allāh's ﷻ fear. Some elders would repeatedly recite a single verse until the morning. Hadrat Imām Abū Hanīfah *rahimahullāh* performed the *'ishā salāh* and the imām read Sūrah az-Zilzāl in it. After completing the salāh, the imām departed, but Hadrat Imām Abū Hanīfah *rahimahullāh* held his beard and continued saying this until the morning: "O the Being who will give reward for a good deed even if it equals an iota, and will mete out punishment for an evil deed even if it equals an iota! Save this servant, Nu'mān [referring to himself], from the Hell-fire."

This was obviously Hadrat Imām Sāhib's *rahimahullāh* internal spiritual condition which is worthy of emulation. There is a need for us to direct ourselves to it. Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* used to relate this incident with much emotion. He used to say: "Just as we make *taqlīd* of his opinions, we ought to make *taqlīd* of his spiritual condition." I personally heard that when an imām read the verse:

إِنَّ بَطْشَ رَبِّكَ لَشَدِيْدٌ

"Surely the grip of your Lord is severe." (Sūrah al-Burūj, 85: 12)

Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* screamed out as if the roof was about to fall. On another occasion, the imām read the following verse in the *fajr salāh*:

إِنَّ جَهَنَّمَ كَانَتْ مِرْصَادًا. لِلطَّاغِيْنَ مَآبًا

"Surely Hell is lying in wait. An abode for the transgressors." (Sūrah an-Naba', 78: 21-22)

Hadrat screamed out aloud on this occasion as well.

Glory to Allāh ﷻ! Such was the condition of our elders, but we do not possess such qualities. We neither have knowledge of this nor do we have a yearning for it. How, then, can true *Dīn* which could rectify and purify our hearts come into us? May Allāh ﷻ inspire us to acquire these qualities. Āmīn.

This insignificant servant wrote another important subject in *Iʿtirāf-e-Qusūr*: If anyone asks you to pardon him for any crime which he committed against you – whether minor or major, whether wittingly or unwittingly – you must immediately lay his heart at rest and inform him that you bear no ill-feeling towards him. This will

certainly be considered to be your honour and good fortune. I think that if we were bear in mind the following Hadīth, there will be no cause for such errors and crimes. The Hadīth reads:

لَيْسَ مِنَّا مَنْ لَّمْ يَرْحَمْ صَغِيْرَنَا وَلَمْ يُوَقِّرْ كَبِيْرَنَا

"The person who does not show mercy to our juniors and does nor accord respect to our seniors is not from among us."

This is no small warning. May Allāh ﷻ protect us through His grace from becoming a target of this Hadīth.

This insignificant servant also included some incidents of the elders from which we learn that there are times when acts of disrespect and audaciousness are committed and they do not pardon them although they are filled with mercy, kindness and affection. In fact, they go to the extent of cursing the person. The misfortune of the person who is cursed by them is obvious. May Allāh ﷻ protect us and keep us in His refuge. Āmīn.

Just as Rasūlullāh ﷺ sought refuge from Allāh's ﷻ wrath, he also sought refuge from the anger and displeasure of Allāh's ﷻ *auliyā'*. Rasūlullāh ﷺ made the following *du'ā'*:

أَللّٰهُمَّ إِنِّيْ أَعُوْذُبِكَ مِنْ سَخَطِكَ وَسَخَطِ أَوْلِيَائِكَ

“O Allāh! I seek refuge in You from Your wrath and from the wrath of Your *auliyā’*.”

We learn the necessity of safeguarding ourselves from the displeasure of Allāh’s ﷾ *auliyā’*. This means we must not do anything which would cause their displeasure, or to displease them in a manner which causes them to be displeased with us forever.

I read a story somewhere about a husband and wife going on a journey. A pious elder (*buzurg*) was also travelling on the same path and he mistakenly pushed the woman. The husband became very angry and slapped him. He bore the slap, did not say anything, and continued on his way in a dignified manner. Later, the husband suddenly suffered from an inability to pass urine. He was severely discomforted and experienced much pain. He thought to himself that Allāh ﷾ is punishing him because he caused pain to the traveller [the *buzurg*]. Upon thinking this, he proceeded quickly, met the *buzurg*, described his condition to him, and asked him for pardon. Look at the wonderful fact which the *buzurg* stated: “I had discomforted your wife, and not you. But you exacted revenge from me. In like manner, I did not exact any revenge from you. Rather, Allāh ﷾ punished you on my behalf. You should therefore seek pardon from Allāh ﷾.”

Friends! Such incidents occur even today. Just as wrong and oppression are committed daily, Allāh’s ﷾ system of punishment and retribution is

continuing. This is irrespective of whether we understand it or not. If we understand this point, peace and tranquillity will be established in this world. Allāh ﷾ said the following in a H̲adīth Qudsī, and it is applicable until the day of Resurrection:

من عادى لي وليا فقد آذنته بالحرب

"I have declared war on the person who causes any harm to My *walī*."

Any person wronging or harming any of the *auliyā'* – in fact, any Muslim because they are all the *auliyā'* of Allāh ﷾ - should be prepared for disastrous consequences, and must be ready to bear suffering for it.

We should never utter any word of criticism or disparaging remarks about any Muslim belonging to any group which is engaged in activities of knowledge, *Dīn*, *daʿwah*, etc., or against the leader of any such group. Such statements result in mutual disputes and arguments.

As for making disrespectful and audacious statements against the noble imāms [of jurisprudence] who have millions of followers, this is a most dangerous and hazardous act.

Just recently I heard from a practising *ʿālim* that talks of certain short-sighted people are being played over cassettes in the H̲aram Sharīf in which they openly criticize and disparage the

senior personalities of Deoband, and even go to the extent of labelling them deviates. Whereas even enemies cannot point a finger against the knowledge, wisdom, rectitude, piety and purity of these personalities. How sad! Such impure and vile talks are played in the Haram Sharīf and people of little understanding are consequently having bad thoughts about the *'ulamā'* of Deoband. This is certainly a cause of division and dissension among the Muslims. This is explicitly prohibited by Allāh ﷾.

A special word of advice

We must always be mindful of one thing, viz. the pious *'ulamā'* and *a'immah mujtahidīn* (four imāms) enjoy a lofty position in Allāh's ﷾ sight, and so, we have to safeguard ourselves against their opposition. It is highly possible for Allāh ﷾ to punish us in this very world. Such punishment would not necessarily be in the form of an illness, death in our family, or destruction of our wealth. Rather, it could take the form of non-enjoyment in our worship, or deprivation of *īmān*. As was the case with Bal'am Bā'ūrā who used to engage in abundant remembrance of Allāh ﷾. But when he showed disrespect to Hadrat Mūsā عليه السلام, Allāh ﷾ snatched his *īmān* away, his tongue began lolling like a dog's, and he suffered loss in this world and in the Hereafter. May Allāh ﷾ protect us.

O Muslims, especially you who have some contact with *Dīnī* and Islamic groups! Be very cautious with your tongues and pens. Do not heap sins on

yourselves because it is a great deception to think you are fulfilling a religious service. Allāh ﷾ says in Sūrah al-Kahf:

اَلَّذِيْنَ ضَلَّ سَعْيُهُمْ فِي الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا وَهُمْ يَحْسَبُوْنَ أَنَّهُمْ يُحْسِنُوْنَ صُنْعًا

"Those whose endeavours were always going astray in the life of this world and were on the assumption that they were working very well." (Sūrah al-Kahf, 18: 104)

O servants of Allāh! Consider it essential to act on the following order of Allāh ﷾:

وَاعْتَصِمُوْا بِحَبْلِ اللهِ جَمِيْعًا وَّلاَ تَفَرَّقُوْا

"Hold fast to the rope of Allāh altogether and do not sow dissension." (Sūrah Āl 'Imrān, 3: 103)

Hadrat Maulānā Shabbīr Ahmad 'Uthmānī *rahimahullāh* has written a very enlightening commentary to this verse. I am quoting it verbatim:

"You should altogether hold on firmly to the Qur'ān which is the strong rope of Allāh. This rope can never break, but it can slip out of your hands. If you all get together and continue holding to it with all your might, no Satan will be able to succeed in his wicked activities. Like the individual life, the collective strength of the Muslim community will also become unshakeable and unruffled. It is only by holding on to the

Qur'ān that the scattered strengths can be gathered and a dead community acquire fresh life. However, holding on to the Qur'ān does not mean that it becomes a prey of one's personal opinions, whims and desires. Only such a meaning of the Qur'ān can be reliable if it is not against the authentic Ahādīth and the explicit sayings of the pious predecessors." (*Tafsīr-e-'Uthmānī*)

We learn from this that just as it is necessary for Muslims to hold firmly to Allāh's rope, it is essential for them to stay away from dissension. Now look at the detestability of dissension and discord: holding on to Allāh's rope is not sufficient, rather, it is essential to stay away from dissension so that the unity of the *ummah* is maintained, and mutual agreement and concord remains. We will have to bear in mind the teachings of our elders in this regard.

Shaykh al-'Arab wa al-'Ajam Hājī Imdādullāh Sāhib Muhājir Makkī *rahimahullāh* said: "People talk about mutual agreement and concord, but they do not adopt the way of acquiring it. It can be achieved by developing humility, submission, and servitude within us. When we acquire these qualities, we will see the good qualities and merits of others. We will not see any good in our selves. Instead, we will look at our own defects and faults. When this happens, then instead of discord, mutual agreement and unity will become easy. Obviously, the ability to look at one's own faults is solely an Allāh-bestowed gift. Rasūlullāh

said: “When Allāh ﷻ wills good for a person, he bestows him with understanding of *Dīn*, makes him abstinent in this world, and enables him to examine his own faults.”

Rasūlullāh ﷺ also said: “When you think of speaking about the faults of others, look at your own faults first.” (*Kashf al-Khifā’*, vol. 1, p. 69)

We learn of the loftiness of the condition of the person who examines his own faults. Our elders were filled with this quality. Hadrat Muslihul Ummat Shāh Wasīyyullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* used to read this couplet regularly:

“I was criticizing others, but no sooner I opened my eyes, I found my heart to be densely filled with faults and defects.”

‘Ārif Billāh Maulānā Muhammad Ahmad Sāhib *rahimahullāh* conveys the same theme as follows:

“The moment I opened my eyes, my own position and rank fell down before me.”

Look at the excellent words of Bahādur Shāh Zafar *rahimahullāh*:

“When we were not mindful of our own condition, we continued looking at the faults and merits of others. No sooner we set eyes on our own evils, we did not consider anyone else to be evil. O Zafar! Do not consider such a person to be a human no matter how intelligent he may be, if he

is not mindful of Allāh ﷾ when in comfort, and not fearful of Him when angry."

May Allāh ﷾ enable all of us to see our own faults and make the way easy for us. This is most certainly easy for Allāh ﷾.

In short, we related many stories and incidents from the lives of the pious elders from which we can learn about their humility, submission, beseeching Allāh ﷾, asking for His pardon, and pardoning others. *Inshā Allāh*, the hard hearts of the readers will not only soften, but turn to wax. Obviously, if the person reads with sincerity, he will certainly develop soft-heartedness. If not, there will be no difference between such a hard heart and a rock. May Allāh ﷾ protect us.

I consider it appropriate to quote the words of Hadrat Shaykh Abū al-Mawāhib ʿAbd al-Wahhāb ibn Ahmad ash-Shaʿrānī *rahimahullāh* which he wrote in the introduction to *at-Tabaqāt al-Kubrā*:

> "There is one additional point which I would like to add: The person who reads books of this nature and does not develop an inclination and yearning for the way of Allāh ﷾, is enumerated among the dead. *Was salām*."

Unfortunately, we do not even make the time to read such books. In fact, even people who are very close to us do not have the desire to read. How, then, can we acquire proximity with and

recognition of Allāh ﷻ? How will the soul acquire purity – whose acquisition was an important objective of Rasūlullāh's ﷺ commissioning as a Prophet? Allāh ﷻ alone gives inspiration.

Allāh ﷻ related the stories of the Prophets عليهم السلام in the Qur'ān and Rasūlullāh ﷺ explained them in detail so that the *ummah* may take admonition, pay heed, and the way may become clear to it. If these stories are read with the intention of taking admonition and with the eyes of the heart – *inshā Allāh* – they will certainly be of benefit. By reading about the excellent lives of the elders, *inshā Allāh* – one will develop a desire to emulate their lives and there is the possibility of being blessed with a share of their lives. This is certainly not difficult for Allāh ﷻ.

I end this subject with an important *du'ā'* of Rasūlullāh ﷺ. It demonstrates his absolute fear, submission and servitude:

اَللّٰهُمَّ ارْزُقْنِيْ عَيْنَيْنِ هَطَّالَتَيْنِ تَسْقِيَانِ الْقَلْبَ بِذُرُوْفِ الدَّمْعِ مِنْ خَشْيَتِكَ قَبْلَ اَنْ تَكُوْنَ الدُّمُوْعُ دَمًا وَالاَضْرَاسُ جَمْرًا.

"O Allāh! Endow me with eyes which tear profusely and thereby drench the heart with flowing tears out of Your fear before the arrival of the time when tears turn into blood and jaws turn into embers."

O Allāh! Enable us to make this *du'ā'* with absolute devotion and bestow us with the

blessings of Rabīʿ al-Awwal. Āmīn. What an excellent couplet is said about this month:

لهذا الشهر في الإسلام فضل – منقبته تفوق على الشهور

ربيع في ربيع في ربيع – نور فوق نور فوق نور

"This month enjoys a lofty position in Islam, and its loftiness surpasses the other months. Spring in spring time in spring time, coming with effulgence above effulgence above another effulgence."

Muhammad Qamar az-Zamān Ilāhābādī
Rabīʿ al-Awwal 1429 A.H.

The essence of the Tarīqah

I now conclude the synopsis of this book with an academic discussion of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat Maulānā Shāh Wasīyyullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* with a bit of commentary. Inspiration is from Allāh ﷻ alone.

He said: There are two fundamentals for the basis of the Tarīqah (in fact, of Islam), viz. humility (*tawādu'*) and placing one's trust in Allāh ﷻ (*tawakkul*). A person will be able to rectify his relationship with Allāh's creation through humility, and with Allāh ﷻ through trust in Him. These two are the fundamentals of Islam and the Tarīqah.

In several places in the Qur'ān, Allāh ﷻ clearly instructed Rasūlullāh ﷺ himself and the *ummah* at large to place their trust in Him. Allāh ﷻ says:

فَإِذَا عَزَمْتَ فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللهِ ؕ إِنَّ اللهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَوَكِّلِيْنَ

"Once you have decided over the matter, place your trust in Allāh. Allāh loves those who place their trust in Him." (Sūrah Āl 'Imrān, 3: 159)

وَعَلَى اللهِ فَتَوَكَّلُوْا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُّؤْمِنِيْنَ

"Place your trust in Allāh alone if you are believers."

Just as Allāh ﷻ ordered us to place our trust in Him, he ordered Rasūlullāh ﷺ to be humble with the believers. Allāh ﷻ says:

وَاخْفِضْ جَنَاحَكَ لِلْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ

"Lower your wing of humility for the believers." (Sūrah al-<u>H</u>ijr, 15: 88)

وَاصْبِرْ نَفْسَكَ مَعَ الَّذِيْنَ يَدْعُوْنَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْغَدٰوةِ وَالْعَشِيِّ يُرِيْدُوْنَ وَجْهَهُ وَلاَ تَعْدُ عَيْنَاكَ عَنْهُمْ تُرِيْدُ زِيْنَةَ الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا

"Keep yourself with those who invoke their Sustainer morning and evening, seeking His countenance. Let not your eyes overlook them, seeking the adornment of this worldly life." (Sūrah al-Kahf, 18: 28)

Now ponder over this: The leader of the Prophets and Messengers ﷺ is ordered to come out of his blessed house and to remain with the downtrodden and broken-hearted people. It is essential for him to console them even if he has to bear hardships. Now consider the following Hadīth in this regard. Rasūlullāh ﷺ and the entire *ummah* are commanded to adopt mutual humility.

عن جابر بن حماد رضي الله عنه قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم إن الله أوحى إلي أن تواضعوا حتى لا يبغي أحد ولا يفخر أحد على أحد. (رواه مسلم)

Hadrat Jābir ibn Hammād ﷺ narrates that Rasūlullāh ﷺ said: "Allāh ﷻ revealed to me saying: 'You all must adopt humility so that no person may commit an excess against another, and no person may vex pride over another.'"

Linguists tells us that the word *baghy* means transgression and committing an excess. We learn from this that the person who is sharp-tongued is really a transgressor and he has no share whatsoever of any humility which is ordered in the above Hadīth with much importance. This is because Rasūlullāh ﷺ said that Allāh ﷻ revealed to him. This in itself shows its importance because there is no statement of Rasūlullāh ﷺ which is not instructed to him by Allāh ﷻ. Allāh ﷻ says:

وَمَا يَنْطِقُ عَنِ الْهَوٰى إِنْ هُوَ إِلاَّ وَحْيٌ يُّوْحٰى

"He does not speak by the desire of his soul. It is solely an order which is sent down." (Sūrah an-Najm, 53: 3)

In the light of the Hadīth, we can say that control and protection of the tongue is a sign of humility, and a person who is sharp-tongued cannot be a humble person. No matter what people may think of him, he is not a humble person.

أوحى الله تعالى إلى داؤد عليه السلام إذا رأيت لي طالبا فكن له خادما (إرشاد الطالبين)

Allāh ﷻ instructed Dā'ūd ﷺ saying: "When you see a person seeking Me, you must become his attendant (*khādim*)."

Another lengthy narration is quoted in *Hilyatul Auliyā'* in which the above statement is quoted as follows:

إذا رأيت لي طالبا فكن لي خادما (حلية الأولياء، ج ١٠، ص ٨٥).

"When you see a person seeking Me, you must become My attendant."

Look at the lofty position of the person who seeks Allāh ﷻ. We ourselves have to seek Allāh ﷻ, and if we seek a person in Allāh's quest, we must give due consideration to him and, in fact, we must serve him and attend to him. We should not shun

such a person as is the norm of those who are blind to the etiquette of the Ṯarīqah. We seek refuge in Allāh ﷻ.

In like manner, we have to value those who are going through grief, worry and stress. Attaching ourselves to them will take us closer to Allāh ﷻ. Instead of pride and arrogance, we must develop humility and submission within us so that the way to Allāh's ﷻ proximity is made easy for us.

The following is stated in *H̲ilyatul Auliyā'*:

عن مالك بن دينار قال قال موسى عليه السلام: يا رب أين أبغيك، قال أبغني عند المنكسرة قلوبهم. (حلية الأولياء، ج٢، ص٤١٣)

Mālik ibn Dīnār narrates that Mūsā عليه السلام asked: "O Allāh! Where should I seek You?" Allāh ﷻ replied: "Seek Me by those who are broken-hearted."

Khwājah Muh̲ammad Maʿs̲ūm *rah̲imahullāh* said: "When any item breaks, its value decreases. But the more the heart breaks, the more its value increases."

A similar meaning is conveyed in ʿAllāmah Iqbāl's famous couplet:

"Do not safeguard and preserve your heart for it is a mirror. When this mirror is broken, it is valued in the sight of the Maker of the mirror."

Another couplet conveys the same meaning:

"The intoxication of recognition [of Allāh ﷻ] inhabits a broken heart. I have heard that this glass [heart] is best when it is intoxicated [in Allāh's love]."

Pardoning, overlooking and submitting one's self

Hadrat Shāh Ghulām 'Alī Dehlawī Mujaddidī *rahimahullāh* wrote a letter to Hadrat Maulānā Khālid Kurdī *rahimahullāh* advising him thus:

> "It is not appropriate for you and I to exact revenge from anyone. Patience and pardoning are the minimum habits and traits of the Sufis. May Allāh ﷻ enable us to practise on this verse:
>
> إِدْفَعْ بِالَّتِيْ هِيَ أَحْسَنُ
>
> "Repulse evil with goodness and a trait that is admirable."
>
> Ponder carefully over the consequence of every act so that the Sufi fraternity is not defamed. Setting your sight on Allāh's will, divine fate, or on the act of Allāh ﷻ must become your firmly embedded trait. *Was salām.*"

He wrote the following reply to a letter of Qādī Shamshīr Khān Sāhib *rahimahullāh*:

> “As-salāmu ʿalaykum. I was pleased to receive your letter. Spend your life and your blessed breaths in Allāh’s remembrance. Consider constant *dhikr*, devotion, humility and submission to be essential traits. Spend your time in meditation (*murāqabah*) and recitation of the Qur’ān. Convey my *salām* to our friends and emphasise on them to adhere to salāh, *dhikr, istighfār, durūd* and recitation of the Qur’ān. *Was salām.*”

He advised another person as follows:

> “You must constantly adhere to the following points as much as possible. Direct your attention and focus towards Allāh ﷻ at every moment, remain expectant of His bestowal, abstain from the company of sinners and the heedless, be soft in speech, abstain from debates and disputes, give no space to malice and enmity in your heart, consider events to be divinely destined, and so, do not quarrel with anyone, and imbibe good character.” (*al-Furqān*, Rabīʿ al-Awwal 1392 A.H.)

If we practise on these internal Sunnahs of Rasūlullāh ﷺ and spiritual lives of the pious elders, Allāh ﷻ will certainly bestow us with internal and spiritual fruits by His grace and

generosity. May Allāh ﷻ bestow all of us with this good fortune. Āmīn.

Gaining Allāh's love is dependent on following the path of the Sunnah

Hadrat Sayyidunā 'Abd al-Qādir Jīlānī *rahimahullāh* writes on the fruits and benefits of following the Sunnah:

"إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّوْنَ اللهَ فَاتَّبِعُوْنِيْ يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللهُ " فبين أن طريق المحبة اتباعه

"Allāh ﷻ states that the way to acquire His love is to follow the words, actions and mannerisms of Rasūlullāh ﷺ. When a person follows Rasūlullāh's ﷺ words and actions, he will acquire the internal fruit and benefit of emulating him. This is because Allāh's bestowals are obtained through good deeds." (*Futūh al-Ghayb*)

The above verse explains the Tarīqah and the objective. We now quote to you the enlightening explanation of Hadrat Sayyidunā 'Abd al-Quddūs Gangohī *quddisa sirruhu* from *Latā'if-e-Quddūsī. Inshā Allāh*, the reader will benefit from it.

Any enlightenment and joy which is not accompanied with emulation of the Sunnah is a deception and whispering from Satan

My dear friends! Allāh ﷻ says the following to those who make false claims of love for Allāh ﷻ:

قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّوْنَ اللهَ فَاتَّبِعُوْنِيْ يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللهُ

"Say: If you love Allāh then follow me, and Allāh will love you."

It is clear from this that Allāh's ﷻ love and friendship for His servants is dependent on following Rasūlullāh ﷺ. Thus, following the Sharīʿah is an indication of guidance and a sign of piety. This is because the external is a reflection of the internal, and one can gauge the internal through the external.

Shaykh Saʿdī *rahimahullāh* said in this regard: "O Saʿdī! If you abandon the path of Rasūlullāh ﷺ, it is impossible for you to tread the straight path." This means that if a person is not able to tread the path of Rasūlullāh ﷺ, let alone not obtaining the true bounty of Allāh ﷻ, he will not even get the dust of that path. Any enlightenment and joy which was not obtained through the defence and protection of the Sharīʿah must be considered to be a deception, trick, and whispering of Satan. Many people of *sulūk* deviated from the path when they did not have the refuge of the Sharīʿah. The majority of the people of *tauhīd* fall into deviation when they do not remain steadfast on the Sharīʿah. In other words, anything which is not under the command and demand of the Sharīʿah is unanimously considered to be a whispering from the cursed Satan.

My friends! Even if a person acquires perfection in the knowledge of Allāh's oneness and cognition (*maʿrifat*), and he is also a *sāhib-e-nisbat* and a person who performs supernatural feats, but if he

is not firm on the injunctions of the Sharīʿah, he is not safe from deception. If a person continues receiving Allāh's bounties despite his non-compliance to the Sharīʿah and his internal condition remains the same despite his disrespect, then this is also a deception." (*Laṯā'if-e-Quddūsī*)

H̲ad̲rat Maulānā Qād̲ī Thanā'ullāh Pānīpattī *rah̲imahullāh* wrote a very enlightening article on this subject in his book *Irshād aṯ-Ṯālibīn*. The essence of his article follows:

A person cannot attain the level of *wilāyat* without practising on the internal and external Sunnahs

It is said that one can acquire influence by practising on *kashf* (expositions), supernatural feats, and conceptual matters. This is why the sages of the Ishrāqīyyīn and the yogis of India used to enjoy such powers. But these powers are not considered by the *Ahlullāh*. They will not even purchase such powers with walnuts and dates. It is not possible to repulse the evils of the soul and Satanic whisperings without following the Sunnah.

He writes further on:

When supernatural feats are manifested together with following the Sunnah, the Sharīʿah and steadfastness (*istiqāmat*), this can be a proof of *wilāyat*. But the strongest proof for it is what is

established from the Hadīth, viz. a person thinks of Allāh ﷾ by merely looking at and staying in the *walī's* company, and everything apart from Allāh ﷾ disappears from his heart. (*Irshād at-Tālibīn*, Persian, p. 24)

Hadrat Muslihul Ummat Shāh Wasīyyullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* said: "A thought came to my mind at this point, viz. people of incorrect intentions can also follow the Sunnah out of show and ostentation. How, then, will we be able to differentiate between *karāmāt* and non-*karāmāt*, and *wilāyat* and non-*wilāyat*? The moment this thought crossed my mind, its answer immediately settled in my heart: Allāh ﷾ will not give such people the inspiration (*taufīq*) to follow the Sunnah.

All beauty and perfection is concealed in following the Sunnah

Shaykh ʿAlī ibn Abū Bakr *quddisa sirruhu* states in *Maʿārij al-Bidāyah*: Every person's beauty and perfection in all matters – external, internal, fundamental, subsidiary, mental, physical, habitual, devotional – is concealed in following the Sunnah. (*Aqwāl-e-Salaf*, vol. 3, p. 155)

The path of acceptance is confined to following the Sunnah

The head teacher of Dār al-ʿUlūm Deoband, Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Yaʿqūb Sāhib *rahimahullāh* said: "The path of acceptance is

confined to following the Sunnah externally, internally, in one's beliefs and in one's actions. Turning away from *bidʿāt* (innovations) and customs in today's times is the essence of following the Sunnah." (*Maktūbāt Yaʿqūbī*, p. 11)

Hadrat Muslihul Ummat Maulānā Shāh Wasīyyullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* says thereafter: "I have not come across such a concise and all-embracing statement on this subject." (*Wasīyyatul Akhlāq*, p. 48)

The essence of the Tarīqah

Just ponder! These statements of our elders on the necessity and importance of following the Sunnah are as clear as the sun. The essence of the Tarīqah therefore entails treading the path of the Sunnah. The one who follows it can acquire the good fortune of *Dīn*, this worldly life, and the Hereafter. As for other paths, they are fraught with danger and nothing else. We seek refuge in Allāh ﷻ.

I consider it essential for myself, my friends and my associates – in fact, for every Muslim – to endeavour to practise on the external and internal Sunnahs so that we can acquire Allāh's proximity and acceptance. This is certainly not difficult for Allāh ﷻ.

ربنا أتمم لنا نورنا واغفرلنا إنك على كل شيء قدير، سبحانك ربك رب العزة عما يصفون وسلام على المرسلين والحمد لله رب العالمين.

Muhammad Qamar az-Zamān Ilāhābādī, *may Allāh pardon him*
Bayt al-Adhkār, Wasīyyābād, Ilāhābād
11 Jumādā al-Ukhrā 1429 A.H.
16 June 2008

PRELUDE

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

نحمده ونصلي على رسوله الكريم

This book which is before the reader is a collection of Muslihul Ummat Muhīyyus Sunnat Hadrat Maulānā Wasīyyullāh Sāhib's *quddisa sirruhu* talks which he delivered in his assemblies in Ramadān al-Mubārak 1383 A.H. Hadrat Maulānā *rahimahullāh* proof read this collection and gave it the name:

الإعتراف والإستغفار من الذنوب من أعظم سنن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم

"Acknowledgement of and seeking forgiveness for sins is one of the greatest Sunnahs of the Prophet ﷺ."

Glory to Allāh! The title itself is the essence and core of the entire subject, we can gauge its importance and significance from this. This subject was published in parts in *Maʿrifat-e-Haqq* in 1383 A.H. and was well accepted. This subject is certainly beneficial and necessary for everyone, especially for the people of *sulūk*. They have to be constantly aware of it and bring it into practice.

Hadrat Maulānā *rahimahullāh* needs no introduction, nor is there any real need to write anything about his lofty talks. If you read this book with concentration, your heart will

spontaneously perceive its benefit and effect. In short, Hadrat Maulānā *rahimahullāh* presents a special Sunnah of Rasūlullāh ﷺ and explains his submission and humility to Allāh ﷻ in the light of a *du‘ā’* which he made:

وَاَنَا الْبَآئِسُ الْفَقِيْرُ، الْمُسْتَغِيْثُ الْمُسْتَجِيْرُ، الْوَجِلُ الْمُشْفِقُ، الْمُقِرُّ الْمُعْتَرِفُ بِذَنْبِيْ. اَسْاَلُكَ مَسْاَلَةَ الْمِسْكِيْنِ، وَاَبْتَهِلُ اِلَيْكَ ابْتِهَالَ الْمُذْنِبِ الذَّلِيْلِ. وَاَدْعُوْكَ دُعَآءَ الْخَآئِفِ الضَّرِيْرِ، وَدُعَآءَ مَنْ خَضَعَتْ لَكَ رَقَبَتُهُ، وَفَاضَتْ لَكَ عَبْرَتُهُ، وَذَلَّ لَكَ جِسْمُهُ، وَرَغِمَ لَكَ اَنْفُهُ.

“I am the one who is afflicted, the one who is in need, the one who is crying out for help, the one who is seeking refuge, the one who is in fear, the one who is in awe [of You], the one who admits and confesses his sins. I beg of You the begging of a destitute, I beseech You the beseeching of a wretched sinner, I ask You the asking of a fearful person who has been afflicted by a calamity, and the asking of the person whose neck is submitted before You, whose tears are flowing for You, whose body is humbled before You, and who has submitted himself before You.”

This *du‘ā’* is included in *Munājāt-e-Maqbul* in the third *manzil*, and we normally read it as a daily practice. But after reading Hadrat Maulānā’s *rahimahullāh* work, it creates a special importance and significance for this *du‘ā’* in our heart. Moreover, we learn many rules and regulations of *sulūk* from which we can gauge Hadrat Maulānā’s *rahimahullāh* level and rank in

knowledge and research. The heart testifies to the fact that many personalities correctly understand Rasūlullāh's ﷺ teachings and even his references. And because these are pious personalities, whatever they say has an effect on the heart, and people benefit from it. This is the bounty of Allāh ﷻ which He bestows on whomever He wills. I am presenting a few examples to enlighten the reader and to fully comprehend this subject.

Despite Rasūlullāh ﷺ being *maʿsūm* (divinely protected from sin), he made the above *duʿā'* which displays his absolute and total submission and humility. Or it could mean that the Prophets عليهم السلام knew that this was the one and only way to enter the path.

A poet says: "The *buzurgs* left their piety at His court of mercy and piety."

No matter how much a servant humbles and submits himself before Allāh ﷻ, it is not sufficient. The Prophets عليهم السلام possessed perfect recognition of Allāh ﷻ. This is why these personalities [pious elders] consider themselves to be sinners before them.

Now if this is the way of prophet-hood (*nubūwwat*), *wilāyat* is most certainly subservient to it and is not a different entity. It is thus impossible for a *walī* to follow any path which is different from this path. A poet says: "Any person who follows a path which is different from the

path of Rasūlullāh ﷺ will never reach his destination."

Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* then quotes many stories and *du'ā's* of the pious elders. While relating how they followed the Sunnah, he says: "Rasūlullāh ﷺ taught the *ummah* this *du'ā'*: 'I am the one who is afflicted…'. Now look how well the *ummah* learnt this *du'ā'* and practised on it." What was the reason for Rasūlullāh ﷺ making this *du'ā'* and acknowledging a sin when he was not a sinner, when he was in fact *ma'sūm*? Hadrat says in this regard:

Allāh ﷻ says in the Qur'ān:

وَآخَرُوْنَ اعْتَرَفُوْا بِذُنُوْبِهِمْ خَلَطُوْا عَمَلاً صَالِحًا وَّآخَرَ سَيِّئًا

"There are others who have confessed their sins [after] having mixed a righteous deed with another that was evil." (Sūrah at-Taubah, 9: 102)

This verse praises those who acknowledge their sins and speaks highly of them. Rasūlullāh's ﷺ rank was one of كان خلقه القرآن (his character was a physical manifestation of the Qur'ān). How, then, could Rasūlullāh ﷺ turn away from acquiring this merit!? We know that every virtue and merit is found to perfection in the Prophets عليهم السلام. Rasūlullāh ﷺ therefore stood in the line of the sinners, acknowledged his sins, and cried before Allāh ﷻ and beseeched Him to the extent of

fulfilling this duty as well, and surpassed everyone in repentance and seeking forgiveness.

Look at the words which he chose for himself – words which no one else could have uttered. He said: “I am the one who is afflicted, the one who is in need, the one who is crying out for help, the one who is seeking refuge, the one who is in fear, the one who is in awe [of You], the one who admits and confesses his sins…”

Glory to Allāh! Look at the level of acknowledging one’s sins and the manner in which he consoled and pacified the sinners through this *du‘ā’*! Look at the level of concern for the condition of sinners by saying to them that he is a Prophet for them as well. If he were to abandon them, where will they go to? Really, there is no shaykh who will lower himself to the level of his *murīd* and tutor him in such a way as demonstrated by Rasūlullāh ﷺ.

You [the reader] can gauge the effectiveness and influence of this subject. This is why I felt the need to collate all these talks and statements which are scattered in different books and articles and to bring them together in one single book. In this way, it will be easy to benefit from them.

Please make *du‘ā’* Allāh سبحانه وتعالى accepts this insignificant servant and enables us all to benefit from this book.

Was salām
A servant of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat

(H̲ad̲rat Maulānā ʿAbd ar-Rah̲mān S̲āh̲ib Jāmī *rah̲imahullāh*)
Khānqāh Was̲īyy al-Ilāhī, Ilāhābād
1383 A.H.

THE ACTUAL BOOK

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

نحمده ونصلي على رسوله الكريم

Hadrat Muslihul Ummat Maulānā Shāh Wasīyyullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* says:

I am quoting two Ahādīth from *Mishkāt Sharīf*. They are the basis for the Sufis' statements wherein they sometimes give preference to a sinner over a worshipper. The Sufis says:

العاصي خير من المدعي

"A sinner is better than a person who claims piety."

I will explain this statement in detail further on. Now listen to the first Hadīth:

عن جندب أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم حدث أن رجلا قال والله لا يغفر الله لفلان وان الله تعالى قال من ذا الذي يتالى على الله أني لا أغفر لفلان فإني قد غفرت لفلان واحبطت عملك. أو كما قال (رواه مسلم)

Hadrat Jundub ﷺ narrates that Rasūlullāh ﷺ related: "A person said: 'I take an oath by Allāh ﷻ that Allāh ﷻ will not forgive such and such person.' Allāh ﷻ said: 'Who is this person who is taking an oath in My name saying that I will not forgive such and such person? Listen! I have

forgiven him and I have cancelled [all your good] deeds.'"

عن أبي هريرة رضي الله عنه قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم إن رجلين كانا في بني إسرائيل متحابَّيْن أحدهما يجتهد في العبادة والآخر يقول مذنب، فجعل يقول اقصر عما أنت فيه، فيقول خلني وربي حتى وجده يوما على ذنب استعظمه، فقال اقصر، فقال خلّني وربي أبعثت علي رقيبا، فقال والله لا يغفر الله لك إذا ولا يدخلك الجنة، فبعث الله إليه ملكا فقبض أرواحهما فاجتمعا عنده فقال للمذنب ادخل الجنة برحمتي وقال للآخر أتستطيع أن تحظر على عبدي رحمتي، فقال لا يا ربي. فقال إذهبوا به إلى النار. (رواه أحمد)

Hadrat Abū Hurayrah ﷺ narrates that Rasūlullāh ﷺ said: "There were two persons in the Banī Isrā'īl who loved each other. One of them used to strive in his worship while the other used to say: 'I am a sinner.' The one who used to strive in his worship [the worshipper] used to say to the sinner: 'Give up what you are doing.' The sinner would reply: 'Leave me to my Lord.' (it is between me and Him. He used to say this out of love and hope) One day he saw him committing a sin which he considered to be a very serious sin. So the worshipper said to him: 'Give it up.' He replied: 'Leave me to my Lord. (it is between me and Him). Do you think you have been sent to guard me?' He replied: 'Allāh will never forgive you and will never admit you into Paradise.' Allāh ﷻ sent an angel who took away their souls. They then presented themselves before Allāh ﷻ. Allāh ﷻ addressed the sinner: 'You may enter Paradise by virtue of My

mercy.' He addressed the other: 'Do you think you have the power to stop My mercy reaching him?' He replied: 'No, my Lord.' Allāh ﷻ ordered [the angels]: 'Take him to the Hell-fire.'"

The need to rectify our character

The Sufis lay great stress on good character and prohibit from evil character. The basis of evil character is pride and ostentation. These evils also develop through worship, and they cause a person to scorn and deride others. Any person possessing these evils can never attain a lofty position and rank in Allāh's ﷻ court. Therefore, more than worship, it is more important to pay attention to this evil. There are many statements of the Sufis in which they speak out against this evil. A poet says:

"Due to arrogance and pride within himself, an ascetic (*zāhid*) could not tread the path safely. Whereas an immoral person entered Dār as-Salām (Paradise) because of his submission and crying [before Allāh ﷻ].

Another poet says:

"This type of worship (which is filled with pride and ostentation) will not avail you in any way. Go and apologize for your shortcomings in obeying [Allāh ﷻ]."

I am explaining the sources of the teachings of the Sufis. Their sources are the very Ahādīth

which are related from Rasūlullāh ﷺ. The outcome and consequence is mentioned in the above H̲adīth, viz. the ostentatious worshipper was ordered to Hell while the sinner was sent to Paradise. The Sufis who are the true followers of the Sunnah save the *sālikīn* from such slippery places. Look at how kind and affectionate they are to us, and look at how they tread this blessed path. May Allāh ﷻ reward them with the best of rewards.

Understand well that any step which does not follow the footsteps of Rasūlullāh ﷺ is invalid and unacceptable in Allāh's ﷻ court. H̲ad̲rat Junayd *rah̲imahullāh* says:

الطرق كلها مسدودة إلا من اقتفى أثر رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم

"All the paths are closed except the one who follows the footsteps of Rasūlullāh ﷺ."

This is the meaning of Shaykh Saʿdī's *rah̲imahullāh* words:

"O Saʿdī! Don't ever think you will be able to cross the path to S̲afā without Rasūlullāh ﷺ. The person who follows a path different from Rasūlullāh's ﷺ will not reach his destination."

Rasūlullāh ﷺ presented a perfect example so that the great *mashā'ikh* may lead the sinners on the same path. The perfect example is his acknowledgement of sins with his words, actions and conditions. He did this so that the

desirability of acknowledging sins may settle firmly in the minds of the people. This is how Rasūlullāh ﷺ supplicated to Allāh ﷻ:

وَاَنَا الْبَآئِسُ الْفَقِيْرُ، الْمُسْتَغِيْثُ الْمُسْتَجِيْرُ، الْوَجِلُ الْمُشْفِقُ، الْمُقِرُّ الْمُعْتَرِفُ بِذَنْبِيْ. اَسْاَلُكَ مَسْاَلَةَ الْمِسْكِيْنِ، وَاَبْتَهِلُ اِلَيْكَ ابْتِهَالَ الْمُذْنِبِ الذَّلِيْلِ. وَاَدْعُوْكَ دُعَآءَ الْخَآئِفِ الضَّرِيْرِ، وَدُعَآءَ مَنْ خَضَعَتْ لَكَ رَقَبَتُهُ، وَفَاضَتْ لَكَ عَبْرَتُهُ، وَذَلَّ لَكَ جِسْمُهُ، وَرَغِمَ لَكَ اَنْفُهُ.

"I am the one who is afflicted, the one who is in need, the one who is crying out for help, the one who is seeking refuge, the one who is in fear, the one who is in awe [of You], the one who admits and confesses his sins. I beg of You the begging of a destitute, I beseech You the beseeching of a wretched sinner, I ask You the asking of a fearful person who has been afflicted by a calamity, and the asking of the person whose neck is submitted before You, whose tears are flowing for You, whose body is humbled before You, and who has submitted himself before You."

Although Rasūlullāh ﷺ was the chief of all the Prophets عليهم السلام, look at the humble words which he uttered. He is crying before Allāh ﷻ and saying that he is in need, in fear, is acknowledging his sins, is a destitute, and a wretched sinner. This was his perfect humility and also a lesson to the *ummah* which taught them: O people! When a personality like this who is *maʿṣūm* (sinless and divinely protected from sin) can submit and humble himself in such a way, how much more

should ordinary people who are filled with sins and engrossed in sins by day and night beseech Allāh سبحانه وتعالى and cry out to him!? This was the Sunnah of all the Prophets عليهم السلام and the salient feature of the pious elders of every era.

We will relate stories of the pious elders later on. Understand one thing at this point: these words of humility and servitude which Rasūlullāh ﷺ expressed are known as *'urūj* and *nuzūl* in the terminology of the Sufis.

Nuzūl* is superior to *'urūj

Nuzūl (lowering and humbling oneself) is unanimously considered to be superior to *'urūj* (making one's self lofty and high). This is because it [*nuzūl*] shows servitude, and servitude is superior to and higher than all other ranks. I remember an incident of H̲ad̲rat H̲ājī Imdādullāh S̲āh̲ib *rah̲imahullāh*: Someone asked him: "H̲ad̲rat, there is a famous story about Sayyidunā 'Abd al-Qādir Jīlānī *rah̲imahullāh*. He sat on the pulpit of the Jāmi' Musjid of Baghdad and said: 'My feet are on the necks of all the *auliyā'*.' Allāh سبحانه وتعالى caused his statement to be conveyed to the ears of all the *auliyā'* and they all replied by saying: بلی علی الرأس والعین (let alone our necks, his feet are even over our heads and eyes). From this incident we gauge that the Qādirīyyah *silsilah* (spiritual lineage) is superior to the other *silsilahs*." H̲ad̲rat H̲ājī S̲āh̲ib *quddisa sirruhu* replied: "No. How can its superiority be proven

from this? The most we can learn from this statement of Hadrat Sayyidunā ʿAbd al-Qādir Jīlānī *rahimahullāh* is that he was experiencing *ʿurūj*, while all the other *auliyā’* were experiencing *nuzūl*, and *nuzūl* is superior to *ʿurūj*. This issue is unanimously accepted by the Sufis.”

The shaykh lowers himself (*nuzūl*) for the sake of rectifying his *tālibīn*

It is the practice of these pious personalities to lower themselves for the sake of rectifying their *tālibīn* (seekers), and they would speak to the person according to his intellect. If the shaykh were to remain on his own level and speak according to his own condition, the *tālibīn* will not benefit. This is because a *tālib* cannot bear the weight of the shaykh’s conditions. You can now understand this in the same light: When Rasūlullāh’s ﷺ focus was on rectifying the *ummah*, he lowered himself from his lofty and high position, took their conditions and capabilities into consideration, and rectified and tutored them accordingly. In this way, the above *duʿā’* has become a Sunnah for the entire *ummah*.

Despite the different levels and ranks of the people of this *ummah*, they are all required to make this *duʿā’* an asylum for their lives. Humility is obviously the basis for all good attributes and character. Rasūlullāh ﷺ was commissioned with the express purpose of teaching good character. Had he made a mere verbal proclamation by saying: “O people! Adopt

humility." No one would have understood what humility is and how it has to be adopted. He therefore placed himself in the row of sinners and disobedient ones, and turned to Allāh ﷻ with repentance. He then uttered each of those words which ought to be uttered by a sinner. Together with uttering the words verbally, he himself became a manifestation of humility, servitude and need. He was sent as a teacher, and had he not taught it in this manner, the *ummah* would not have learnt about it.

Rasūlullāh's ﷺ favour on this *ummah*

You must understand one additional point here. When Rasūlullāh ﷺ presented a perfect example for the sinners by his words, actions and conditions, he actually did us a great favour because a person could have assumed that because a sinner is a criminal, he cannot have the courage to address Allāh ﷻ, and he would stutter and falter at the time when he had to acknowledge his sin. A poet says:

أحِبُّ مناجاةَ الحبيبِ بأوجهٍ – ولكن لسانَ المذنبين كليلٌ

"I would like to engage in private conversation with the True Beloved [Allāh ﷻ] in different ways. But the tongue of sinners is weak and feeble. How, then, can I do this?"

But after Rasūlullāh ﷺ taught us how to acknowledge our sins, it will not be correct to say that the tongue of sinners is weak and feeble. At

times a person expresses his own thoughts by himself. And at times, he expresses the thoughts of others on their behalf with his tongue. In this case, Rasūlullāh ﷺ expresses the thoughts of the sinners on their behalf. Now if any sinner utters the same words, he will be uttering the words of Rasūlullāh ﷺ. Obviously, Rasūlullāh's ﷺ tongue was not weak and feeble. Therefore, when a sinner utters these words at the time of acknowledging his sins, his tongue would not be weak and feeble. This is because he is not uttering them with his own tongue but through the tongue of Rasūlullāh ﷺ.

After hearing this *duʿā'* of Rasūlullāh ﷺ, no sinner can think that his tongue his weak and feeble. Based on this, the poet's statement is not correct. In other words, after Rasūlullāh ﷺ made this *duʿā'*, no sinner's tongue can be weak and feeble.

Rasūlullāh ﷺ made this *duʿā'* despite being *maʿṣūm.* He either made it out of total humility and servitude, or because he and the other Prophets عليهم السلام understood that this was the only way of admission [in Allāh's court]. A poet says:

"The greatest of people abandon thoughts of their greatness in Allāh's court of affection and greatness."

No matter how much a servant lowers and submits himself before his Master [Allāh سبحانه وتعالى], it is insufficient. The Prophets عليهم السلام possess total and perfect recognition of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى. This is why they

consider themselves sinners before Him. Now if this is the norm with prophet-hood (*nubūwwat*), then *wilāyat* is a subsidiary of *nubūwwat* and subservient to it. It is not a separate independent entity. That is why no *walī* can have the audacity to move away from this path and choose a different path. A poet says:

"Any one who chooses a path different from the path of Rasūlullāh ﷺ will never reach his destination."

Arrogance and self-conceit are attributes of Satan

I had said that this [way of humility and servitude] is the only way [to Allāh ﷻ]. Understand this statement as follows: Satan was the first to display arrogance and self-conceit. He considered himself to be better than Hadrat Ādam عليه السلام. Pharaoh also followed him and said in his extreme pride:

أَنَا رَبُّكُمُ الأَعْلَى

"I am your lord, most high."

In fact, Pharaoh surpassed Satan in this regard because Satan's statement was in comparison to Hadrat Ādam عليه السلام while this wretched person [Pharaoh] said it against Allāh ﷻ and claimed to be the highest lord. The fate which these two met because of these statements is clear, i.e. Satan

became accursed, and Pharaoh was rejected and repulsed.

The Prophets ﷩ had the above scene before them, and on the other side, they had the scene of Allāh's ﷻ might and power before which they considered their own existence to be nothing. In addition to this, they presented themselves before Allāh ﷻ as incapable, poor, sinful, insignificant servants, and as people who acknowledge their sins. On one hand, the story of Satan prompted them to do this, and on the other hand, they acknowledged Allāh's greatness, His might and power overwhelms their hearts.

Consequently, the more the greatness of Allāh ﷻ settles in the heart, the more a person considers himself insignificant and worthless before Allāh ﷻ. We can gauge from this the extent of Allāh's ﷻ greatness in Rasūlullāh's ﷺ pure heart, but we cannot estimate it correctly because it is an internal matter.

The heart of a believer is a manifestation of Allāh ﷻ. Rasūlullāh ﷺ is the core of this universe and the reason behind its creation. Thus, the extent of Allāh's manifestation in Rasūlullāh's ﷺ illuminated heart is obvious. An inkling of this can be gauged from the words which he uttered. For example, he said:

وَاَنَا الْبَآئِسُ الْفَقِيْرُ، الْمُسْتَغِيْثُ الْمُسْتَجِيْرُ...

"I am the one who is afflicted, the one who is in need, the one who is crying out for help, the one who is seeking refuge..."

Rasūlullāh ﷺ used the word "I" on this occasion. It shows that this word can be used in such circumstances. It is not the "I" which is reprehensible.

When can the word "I" be used

My heart desires to quote the discussion on the word "I" from *Mirqāt*. Hadrat Mullā ʿAlī Qārī *rahimahullāh* has provided an excellent explanation which, in addition to being a very academic discussion, is also very enjoyable and pleasant. The essence of it is as follows:

One day Rasūlullāh ﷺ asked the Sahābah ﷺ: "Who among you is fasting today?" Hadrat Abū Bakr ﷺ replied: "I am." Rasūlullāh ﷺ asked: "Who among you attended a funeral today?" Hadrat Abū Bakr ﷺ replied: "I." Rasūlullāh ﷺ asked: "Who among you visited a sick person today?" Hadrat Abū Bakr ﷺ replied: "I did." Rasūlullāh ﷺ said: "When these qualities are collectively found in a person, he will be in Paradise." (*Mishkāt Sharīf*, vol. 1)

Hadrat Mullā ʿAlī Qārī *rahimahullāh* quotes from ʿAllāmah Tībī *rahimahullāh* who said: "Hadrat Abū Bakr ﷺ used the word 'I' for the sake of

specifying, and not to show off or boast as is done by people on occasions of vexing their pride. The Sufis prohibit the use of the word 'I' on such occasions [of vexing pride]. Apart from this, it is permissible. Rasūlullāh ﷺ himself was ordered to use it. Allāh ﷻ says:

قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَنَا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ

"Say: I am a human just like you."

وَمَا أَنَا مِنَ الْمُتَكَلِّفِيْنَ

"I am not of those who go to formalities."

There are numerous other texts where the word "I" is used. As for Rasūlullāh's ﷺ disapproval on using this word, it was during an incident when a Sahābī ؓ knocked on Rasūlullāh's ﷺ door and when he asked "Who is there?", he replied: "I." This was an occasion which required the person to inform of his identity, specify who he was, and say his name. Merely saying "I" was not sufficient to specify who he was. The most the listener can learn is that someone is calling out, and this was already learnt by just knocking on the door. Furthermore, the word "I" is general, and any person can refer to himself by it. The author of *Mirqāt* continues:

"In short, the word 'I' is not reprehensible in itself. It is reprehensible when it is used to boast about one's self. For example, when Satan said: "I

am better than him [Ādam ﷤]", or when Pharaoh said: "I am your lord, most high."

If anyone says:

أَنَا الْعَابِدُ، أَنَا الزَّاهِدُ، أَنَا الْعَالِمُ

"I am a worshipper, I am an ascetic, I am an *ʿālim*."

He will be emulating Satan and Pharaoh. On the other hand, if he says:

أَنَا الْفَقِيْرُ، أَنَا الْحَقِيْرُ، أَنَا الْعَبْدُ، أَنَا الْمُذْنِبُ

"I am in need, I am worthless, I am a servant, I am sinner."

Or other similar words, they will be considered to be words of humility which are in accordance with the Sunnah, and the person will be one who adheres to the Sunnah. Emulating Rasūlullāh ﷺ in *sulūk* is also essential. The person will be one who adheres to the Sunnah because Rasūlullāh ﷺ also said about himself:

وَاَنَا الْبَآئِسُ الْفَقِيْرُ، الْمُسْتَغِيْثُ الْمُسْتَجِيْرُ...

"I am the one who is afflicted, the one who is in need, the one who is crying out for help, the one who is seeking refuge..."

It is also essential to follow the Sunnah in *sulūk*

Rasūlullāh ﷺ used these words to display Allāh's ﷻ greatness. How can others be blessed with this fortune? It is impossible for others to have the condition of the Prophets عليهم السلام. But it is still necessary for a believer to utter these words because this is the only way. The *buzurgs* say that the first step in T̲arīqah is to obliterate one's self (*nafs*). This is what Rasūlullāh ﷺ is displaying through his words and condition. This "I" which Rasūlullāh ﷺ used is actually an obliteration. Now it is impossible for you to reach Allāh ﷻ through your own efforts without following Rasūlullāh ﷺ.

"O Saʿdī! Don't ever think you will be able to cross the path to S̲afā without Rasūlullāh ﷺ. The person who follows a path different from Rasūlullāh's ﷺ will not reach his destination."

One must understand that the path is completely sealed off; it will only open by following the Sunnah, and one will be able to traverse it in the light of the Qur'ān and Sunnah. Allāh ﷻ says:

لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِيْ رَسُوْلِ اللهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ

"There is a good example for you in the Messenger of Allāh." (Sūrah al-Ah̲zāb: 33: 21)

قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّوْنَ اللهَ فَاتَّبِعُوْنِيْ يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللهُ

"Say: If you have love for Allāh then follow my way so that Allāh may love you." (Sūrah Āl 'Imrān, 3: 31)

وَأَطِيْعُوا اللهَ وَأَطِيْعُوا الرَّسُوْلَ فَإِنْ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ فَإِنَّمَا عَلَى رَسُوْلِنَا الْبَلاَغُ الْمُبِيْنُ

"Obey Allāh and obey the Messenger. But if you turn away, then Our Messenger's only responsibility is to clearly convey [the message]." (Sūrah at-Taghābun, 64: 12)

When emulating or following someone, it is necessary for the person to obliterate his self-ego. Thus, we see the Prophets ﵈ detesting the self-ego which Satan and Pharaoh possessed. After Rasūlullāh ﷺ, all the Sufis were bent on removing this self-ego from their selves because they saw how it destroyed Satan and Pharaoh. The Sufis took a lesson from this and made a firm determination not to follow in their footsteps. Let alone having an iota of such self-ego, they remained at a great distance from it.

Maulānā Rūm *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* mentions this theme in his *Mathnawī*. He says:

"My life became happy with the absence of self-ego (in other words, it became connected with Allāh ﷻ), and then the 'I' of this world was obliterated. When I escaped from self-ego, I really became worthy of saying 'I'. May thousands of

blessings be showered on this 'I' which was acquired without any difficulty."

What can be said about the purity of this theme, but it has remained a puzzle. On the other hand, the speech of the *'ulamā'* is absolutely clear and lucid. There is another popular couplet of the *Mathnawī*:

"When Pharaoh said: 'I am the truth', he was disgraced and humiliated. When Mans̲ūr said: 'I am the truth', he became drunk with the love of Allāh."

From this we learn that peoples' conditions are different. Pharaoh made the above statement and became rejected. When H̲ad̲rat Mans̲ūr *rah̲imahullāh* said it, he became a *majdhūb* (one who is mad in Allāh's love). Maulānā Rūm *rah̲imahullāh* has clearly differentiated the difference in meaning between the two statements. Despite this, the explanation provided by the *'ulamā'* on the H̲adīth concerning the word "I" surpasses Maulānā Rūm's *rah̲imahullāh* explanation.

H̲ad̲rat Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānwī *rah̲imahullāh* used to say: "I received an excellent explanation from Allāh سبحانه وتعالى in the difference between the statements of Pharaoh and H̲ad̲rat Mans̲ūr *rah̲imahullāh*. When Pharaoh said 'I', he was refuting the truth and affirming 'I'. When he said: 'I am your lord, most high', he meant: 'I am the one who is worthy of being a manifestation of the

highest lord. There is no lord apart from me.' When Hadrat Mansūr *rahimahullāh* said: 'I am the truth', he aimed to refute and negate his own self [his 'I'], and affirm the truth. He meant to say: 'I am nothing. Allāh ﷻ alone is the real truth."

In short, when the *'ulamā'* explain the *masā'il* of *tasawwuf*, they derive them from the Qur'ān and Hadīth and explain them in a manner which opens our eyes. However, since people in general do not understand the Qur'ān and Hadīth, they do not understand the *masā'il* of *tasawwuf* as well.

Nevertheless, the lesson which Rasūlullāh ﷺ taught to the *ummah* through this *du'ā'* was accepted with heart and soul by the *ummah*. The *mashā'ikh* of every era revived this special condition of Rasūlullāh ﷺ and explained it through their own conditions and actions. Just as the *'ulamā'-e-zāhir* (the *'ulamā'* who look at the outward) explained Rasūlullāh's ﷺ statements and instructions, the *mashā'ikh* clearly explained and clarified Rasūlullāh's ﷺ different conditions. It is perfectly correct to say that a condition can only be explained fully through a condition; a mere word or action is not sufficient.

Thus, one can influence the condition of others through one's own condition. Or it can be created through a person's verbal statements if he experiences such conditions himself. I will now relate to you some stories of the pious elders from which you can deduce how firmly they adhered to

this Sunnah of Rasūlullāh ﷺ as well. Had these personalities not repeated them from time to time, let alone their not possessing such conditions, we would not even have had knowledge of them. Now that you learnt of Rasūlullāh's ﷺ condition from the *du'ā'*:

وَاَنَا الْبَآئِسُ الْفَقِيْرُ، الْمُسْتَغِيْثُ الْمُسْتَجِيْرُ...

"I am the one who is afflicted, the one who is in need, the one who is crying out for help, the one who is seeking refuge..."

You can learn it from the story of a senior personality from the family of prophet-hood, and a member of the *silsilah*.

The story of H̲ad̲rat Zayn al-'Ābidīn *rah̲imahullāh* and As̲mu'ī *rah̲imahullāh*

As̲mu'ī *rah̲imahullāh* relates: "I was performing *t̲awāf* of the Ka'bah one night, when I saw a youngster holding on to the cover of the Ka'bah and saying these couplets:

يا من يجيب دعاء المضطر في الظلم – يا كاشف الضر والبلوى مع السقم

"O the Being who accepts the *du'ā'* of the afflicted in the darkness of the night! O the one who removes the pain and sorrow of the one who is sick!"

قد نام وفدك حول البيت وانتبهوا – وأنت يا حي يا قيوم لم تنم

"The delegation which has come to You walked around the Ka'bah, fell asleep, and woke up again. But O the ever-living and the One who upholds everything! You are a Being who never sleeps."

أدعوك ربي حزينا هائما قلقا – فارحم بكائي بحق البيت والحرم

"O my Lord! I am making *du'ā'* to you while I am in a state of pain, stress and despondence. So have mercy on my crying by virtue of the Ka'bah and the Haram."

إن كان جودك لا يرجوه ذو سفه – فمن يجود على العاصين بالكرم

"If any foolish person does not hope in Your pardon, who will show pardon to the sinners?"

After saying the above couplets, he cried profusely and made the following *du'ā'*:

ألا أيها المقصود في كل حاجة – شكوت إليك الضر فارحم شكايتي

"O the One who is our objective for every need! I have explained my pain to You. Now show mercy to my pain [by removing it]."

ألا يا رجائي أنت تكشف كربتي – فهب لي ذنوبي كلها واقض حاجتي

“O the One who is my only hope! You alone can remove my sorrow and grief. Pardon, then, all my sins and fulfil all my needs.”

أتيت بأعمال قباح ردية – وما في الورى عبد جنى كجنايتي

“I have come to You with detestable and terrible deeds. I do not think there is anyone in the creation who committed sins as I did.”

أتحرقني بالنار يا غاية المنى – فأين رجائي ثم أين مخافتي

“O the One who is the limit of my hopes! Are You going to burn me in the fire? If this were to happen, of what benefit will my hopes be to me, and of what help will my fear be to me?”

After saying this, he fell unconscious to the ground.

H̲ad̲rat Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn’s servitude and submission

As̲muʿī *rah̲imahullāh* says: “When I looked closely at this youngster, I realized he was H̲ad̲rat Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn ʿAlī ibn H̲usayn ibn ʿAlī ibn ʿAbī T̲ālib ﵁. On seeing him, I placed his blessed head in my lap and began crying myself. A few drops of my tears fell on his cheeks, causing him to open his eyes, and he said: ‘Who is this who has become a barrier between me and my Allāh, and is

crowding me?’ I said: ‘Hadrat, I am your servant, Asmuʿī.’ I added: ‘O our master! You are from the family of Rasūlullāh ﷺ, why, then, are you so frightened and terrified? Did Allāh ﷾ not say:

إِنَّمَا يُرِيْدُ اللهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُمُ الرِّجْسَ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِيْرًا

“Allāh only wants to remove loathsome things from you, O family of the Prophet, and to completely purify you.” (Sūrah al-Ahzāb, 33: 33)

He said: ‘O Asmuʿī! What are you saying? Allāh ﷾ created Paradise for those who are obedient to Him, even if they are Abyssinian slaves. And created Hell for the sinners even if they are Sayyids and Qurayshīs. Did Allāh ﷾ not say:

فَإِذَا نُفِخَ فِي الصُّوْرِ فَلاَ أَنْسَابَ بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ وَلاَ يَتَسَاءَلُوْنَ. فَمَنْ ثَقُلَتْ مَوَازِيْنُهُ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُوْنَ. وَمَنْ خَفَّتْ مَوَازِيْنُهُ فَأُولئِكَ الَّذِيْنَ خَسِرُوْآ أَنْفُسَهُمْ فِيْ جَهَنَّمَ خٰلِدُوْنَ

“Then when the trumpet is blown, neither will there be any kinship on that day nor will they ask about one another. Then he whose scales are heavy – it is they who are successful. And he whose scales are heavy – it is they who are successful.” (Sūrah al-Mu’minūn, 23: 101-103)

Glory to Allāh! Look at the pure condition of his pure heart. Look at how adherent he was to the Sunnah. He displayed his condition to the latter generations through his condition, and we do not

know how many people he must have influenced through it. And so, this sequence continued and is continuing, even if it may be little at present.

Sayyidunā ʿAbd al-Qādir's fear and submission

Shaykh Saʿdī *rahimahullāh* writes in his *Bustān*:

"People saw Hadrat ʿAbd al-Qādir Jīlānī *rahimahullāh* placing his forehead on the pebbles of the Haram Sharīf and saying: 'O Allāh! Pardon me. If I am eligible for punishment, then raise me blind on the day of Resurrection so that I do not feel ashamed in the presence of pious people.'"

Glory to Allāh! Look at his excellent condition. Although we hear the words of fear and hope, we can fully understand their meaning from the actions and conditions of these personalities. There is another incident about him wherein it is related that he sat on the pulpit of the Jāmiʿ Musjid of Baghdad and said: "My feet are on the necks of all the *auliyā'*." On hearing these words, the *auliyā'* in their respective places said: "Not only on our necks, but on our heads and eyes." Such was his rank, yet look at the level of his fear and submission: he is lying on the pebbles of the Haram Sharīf, crying to Allāh ﷻ and asking Him to pardon him his sins. We learn from this condition of his that obedience had had its effect on him, and through it, Allāh's total recognition had entered his heart. He goes one step further by considering himself to be extremely sinful.

This is the effect of genuine obedience. If after obedience, a person does not develop humility, servitude, submission and self-effacement (*fanā'īyyat*), one can conclude that there was no sincerity in his worship. Maulānā Rūm *rahimahullāh* says with regard to such people:

"Ādam عليه السلام possessed the qualities of humility, submission, servitude, humbleness, turning to Allāh سبحانه وتعالى, repentance, seeking forgiveness, and acknowledgement of sins. Now if any human does not possess these qualities, can he be considered to be a human?"

In reality, a human is one who possesses the qualities of Ādam عليه السلام and inherits the attributes of his father. If not, he will be merely possessing the physical appearance of his father while being devoid of his true legacy. This is similar to a person donning a lion's skin. He may look like a lion but will not be one in reality. Maulānā Rūm *rahimahullāh* continues:

"A *mu'min* (believer) does not enjoy honour and respect from the letters *mīm, wāw, mīm, nūn*. These letters are merely to give him an identity."

A true *mu'min* will be he who possesses the attributes of a *mu'min*. Applying the word *mu'min* to a *munāfiq* is similar to calling a person a lion by his donning a lion's skin. There are many such people in today's times. Look at the beautiful names which they keep, but they are devoid of

true qualities. Maulānā Rūm *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* says with regard to such people:

"He is committing the acts of Satan, but his name is *walī*. If this is what a *walī* is, then may curses descend on the *walī*."

It is necessary to follow the life of Shaykh ʿAbd al-Qādir

This aspect of <u>H</u>a<u>d</u>rat Shaykh ʿAbd al-Qādir Jīlānī's *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* life is a proof against those who believe in him but do not possess this quality in their life. I am relating these stories of the *buzurgs* so that you may get an inkling of the life and conditions of Rasūlullāh ﷺ, you may learn the real meaning of fear and submission, and how much servants must fear Allāh ﷻ. People now tell us that the Qur'ān is sufficient for actions. I say to them: It is undoubtedly sufficient, but when did you make it sufficient? After all, the very same Qur'ān says:

يَرْجُوْنَ رَحْمَتَهُ وَيَخَافُوْنَ عَذَابَهُ

"They hope for Allāh's mercy and they fear His punishment."

You may have merely looked at its translation, but when did you try to understand who it applies to? This you will learn from the lives of the *buzurgs*. I now ask you: Is this fear, etc. a description of the tongue or a condition of the heart? How much of attention did you pay to it,

and when did you get the opportunity to turn your attention towards your heart? People want to fulfil the tasks of the heart with their tongue, and offer a verbal statement instead of a state and condition. It does not work like this. The *buzurgs* developed a condition within themselves and then conveyed it to others. And this is the way of conveying and proliferating a thing. In other words, when seniors want juniors to fulfil a certain task, they do it themselves first. This is the Sunnah way. Rasūlullāh ﷺ made this *du'ā'*:

أَللَّهُمَّ لاَ مَانِعَ لِمَا أَعْطَيْتَ وَلاَ مُعْطِيَ لِمَا مَنَعْتَ

"O Allāh! If You will to give me something, there is none to stop it from reaching me. And if You will to deny me anything, there is none who can give it to me."

The Sahābah ﷺ also heard this *du'ā'* and they all developed the conviction that every task of a believer is undoubtedly accomplished through Allāh's ﷻ help. Similarly, when Hadrat Sayyidunā 'Abd al-Qādir Jīlānī *rahimahullāh* did the above-mentioned act before everyone, he did it so that they may all go and convey it to others, and it may serve as a whip for all the worshippers. In other words, they may realize that when such a great shaykh does not have any expectations in his own good deeds, how can we have any expectations [of reward] from our deeds?

Shaykh Saʿdī *rahimahullāh* related this incident in his book so that it may at least be mentioned verbally in every era. When it is continually related verbally, one can hope it will eventually have an effect on the heart. If the incident was not recorded in a book, it will not even be mentioned verbally. So as long as there are people who witnessed the incident, mention of it will be made. Once the eye witnesses depart from this world, mention of it will end because the principle is that words of worth remain with the righteous, and when they depart, the words also come to an end.

In short, when the shaykh cried in such a manner in the Haram Sharīf, he caused the hearts of all who were present to tremble, and we do not know how many countless people he joined to their Creator by his crying. Although this incident may seem insignificant, it had a profound effect on those who were present and those who came after, and became a means of conveying them to Allāh ﷻ.

I say to you: When such a condition develops in you, then no matter where you go, you have nothing to fear. Whether you fly in an aeroplane or go to any place, it will not affect you. But if such a condition is not found in a heart, then even an ordinary thorn is sufficient to upset a person, and every thing of this world will become a thorn.

I stated earlier that when seniors want juniors to do a particular task, they do it themselves first so that the juniors may emulate them. It is the norm for juniors to emulate their seniors. When a shaykh does not do a particular action, the *murīd* too will not do it. In fact, the slightest neglect on the part of the shaykh will cause people to move far away from the action.

An incident concerning Hadrat Shaykh al-Hind *rahimahullāh*

I personally witnessed this: The building for the Dār al-Hadīth of Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband was under construction. The foundations were dug and there was a sudden downpour which filled all the foundations with water and posed a danger to the other buildings as well. Hadrat Shaykh al-Hind Maulānā Mahmūd al-Hasan Deobandī *rahimahullāh* used to come daily. I remember the principal going to Hadrat Shaykh al-Hind *rahimahullāh* and explaining the situation to him. Hadrat did not say anything to anyone, including the students. Instead, he took a utensil, stepped into the water, and began throwing it out of the foundations. On seeing this, all the students got into the water and began throwing it out. All the water was removed within a few hours.

It is human nature to emulate (make *taqlīd* of) the seniors – in good and in evil. There is a famous saying: The musk-melon takes its colour from another musk-melon. Look! When Rasūlullāh ﷺ displayed humility and servitude, Hadrat Zayn al-

ʿĀbidīn *rahimahullāh* also adopted the same qualities, and you noticed the same thing in the story of Hadrat Jīlānī *rahimahullāh.*

Hadrat Muʿāwiyah's ﷺ advice before his demise

Now listen to an incident from the life of a Companion of Rasūlullāh ﷺ, Hadrat Muʿāwiyah ﷺ. Look at how he had set right his affairs with Allāh ﷻ. ʿAbdullāh Sahmī narrates that Thumāmah ibn Kulthūm related that this was the last address of Hadrat Muʿāwiyah ﷺ:

"O people! I was your governor till now. You must realize that you will not get a better governor than me after me. Anyone who comes as a governor after me will be worse than me." After saying this, he addressed Yazīd saying: "Listen! When I pass away, you must appoint an intelligent person to see to my *ghusl* (bathing) arrangements. You must open the treasury and remove the cloth in which is a garment of Rasūlullāh ﷺ, a few strands of his blessed hair, and a few pieces of his blessed nails. You must place those pieces on my nose, face and eyes; and place the cloth inside my *kafan* (shroud) attached to my body. Remember Allāh's advice with regard to the rights of parents. Carry my *janāzah* to the grave-yard, place me in my grave, and hand me over to the most Merciful of those who show mercy."

Glory to Allāh! Look at Hadrat Muʿāwiyah ﷺ and his bequest. He possessed an extraordinary

condition even when he was alive. Whenever he used to think about the eras of Rasūlullāh ﷺ, Hadrat Abū Bakr ؓ and Hadrat ʿUmar ؓ, he would cry profusely and consider himself to be worthless. I read in a book that he used to say: “May Allāh ﷻ show mercy to Abū Bakr ؓ, he departed from this world in an absolutely pure state.” In other words, he neither desired this world nor did the world desire him. “May Allāh ﷻ show mercy on ʿUmar ؓ. He did not desire the world but the world desired him. As for Muʿāwiyah, he became engrossed with the world.” Saying this, he would cry profusely until his beard would become wet with his tears.

After all, he was a Sahābī ؓ of Rasūlullāh ﷺ, and he had imbibed his teachings and life. The fear and servitude which he saw in Rasūlullāh ﷺ came into his life as well. This was the state of his fear which remained with him throughout his life. But in the latter part of his life, he caused hope to take precedence. Consequently, in his state of hope he said: “place me in my grave, and hand me over to the most Merciful of those who show mercy.” This means, his salvation lies solely on the mercy and kindness of the most Merciful of those who show mercy.

The moral stories of the pious personalities

The very same humility, servitude, repentance, turning to Allāh ﷻ, and seeking His forgiveness remained the salient feature of the pious

personalities of every era. In his *Gulistān*, Shaykh Saʿdī *raḫimahullāh* has a chapter titled "Character and mannerisms of the ascetics" in which he relates most inspiring stories of the pious personalities. They explain the Ṯarīqah totally and many people have become *walīs* through them. He writes:

"The *buzurgs* saw an ascetic rubbing his head on the threshold of the Kaʿbah. He was crying and saying: 'O the most-forgiving, O the most-merciful! You know very well that a wrong-doer and ignorant person can do nothing but wrong and acts of ignorance.' This means: O Allāh! You Yourself referred to man as a wrong-doer and ignoramus in the Qur'ān. I am also a member of the human race. That is why I am also engrossed in wrong and ignorance. I have presented myself before You and offered the reason for my misdemeanour. I do not have the support of any act of obedience. The sinners repent over their sins and those who have truly recognized you (the *ʿārifīn*) seek Your forgiveness for their worship. Because they are *ʿārifīn*, they understand that their worship is not good enough for the grand Being of Allāh. Therefore, this worship of theirs is no worship but really a sin. Worshippers want the recompense for their obedience, and traders want the returns for their investment. This servant has no acts of obedience. This is why I have come with hope and presented myself. I have come as a beggar and not as a trader. So treat me in accordance with Your grand status, and not according to what I deserve [i.e. the punishment

which I deserve]. You can kill me if You want, or You can pardon my sins. No matter what, my head is placed before You. It is the duty of a slave to carry out the orders of his master, and I am ready for whatever order You issue. I saw a beggar at the door of the Kaʿbah who was crying and saying: 'I am not asking You to accept my acts of obedience. Rather I am asking You to pardon me my sins.'" (*Gulistān*, p. 71)

Once the *buzurgs* trod the path and realized that the Ṯarīqah entails humility and self-effacement, these servants of Allāh ﷻ obliterated themselves in a manner which is unparalleled. In other words, once they focused on this aspect, they considered themselves to be the most worthless of all people. Although they were protected and despite their abundant acts of obedience, they considered themselves to be sinners.

The story of H̲ad̲rat Dhun Nūn Mis̲rī

The story of H̲ad̲rat Dhun Nūn Mis̲rī *rah̲imahullāh* is related in the *Bustān*. One year there was no water in the Nile river, and consequently, the signs of drought were visibly seen. Some people went out into the desert to beg for water. They cried profusely and beseeched [Allāh ﷻ], but there was still no rain. H̲ad̲rat Dhun Nūn Mis̲rī *rah̲imahullāh* was also informed about the people's predicament and was requested to make *duʿā'* to Allāh ﷻ. They said to him: "You are an accepted servant of Allāh ﷻ and the *duʿā'* of His accepted servants is not rejected."

Shaykh [Saʿdī] writes: I heard that when H̲ad̲rat Dhun Nūn Mis̲rī *rah̲imahullāh* was told this, he left for Madyan. The moment he left Egypt, the rains started falling. On reaching Madyan, he was informed of the rains, and of the river brimming with water. An *ʿārif* asked him: 'What was the reason for your leaving Egypt?' He replied: 'I heard that a drought comes because of the evil deeds of evil people. When I pondered over this, I did not see anyone more sinful than me. So I left Egypt thinking to myself: 'Why should these people suffer unnecessarily because of my wrong-doings?'"

Glory to Allāh! Look at the ways of our past personalities and how they considered themselves to be the most sinful of all. This is the very same H̲ad̲rat Dhun Nūn about whom someone complained to the king. The king summoned for whom and when he engaged in a conversation with him, he gauged the high level of his knowledge, merit and piety. He became his devotee and accorded him much honour. He said: "When the *auliyā'* are mentioned in an assembly and Dhun Nūn Mis̲rī is not mentioned in it, then a serious wrong has been committed."

Someone said to H̲ad̲rat Maulānā Thānwī *rah̲imahullāh* about this incident: "H̲ad̲rat Dhun Nūn Mis̲rī *rah̲imahullāh* said that he was the most sinful of all. This appears to be contradictory to what he really is." H̲ad̲rat Thānwī *rah̲imahullāh* replied: "He is probably making a correct statement." I did not have the courage to

ask Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī *rahimahullāh* the real meaning of this, but I understood it later on. The immense bounties and favours of Allāh ﷻ on these personalities in comparison to their obedience and worship caused them to consider themselves sinners. Hadrat Dhun Nūn *rahimahullāh* said it in this state, and this is how servants ought to be.

This humble servant, Qamar az-Zamān, says: Although Hadrat Dhun Nūn Misrī *rahimahullāh* was fully engaged in *dhikr* and other acts of obedience, he considered himself to be a sinner and acknowledged his sins. This was really in emulation of the Sunnah of Rasūlullāh ﷺ with regard to acknowledging sins. He did not only say it verbally, but displayed it with his condition and actions. He left his hometown and went to another place. Allāh ﷻ loved his emulation of the Sunnah and sent down His rains to the people.

After hearing these incidents you must have gauged that the *ummah* learnt the lesson which was taught by Rasūlullāh ﷺ through the *duʿā'*:

وَاَنَا الْبَآئِسُ الْفَقِيْرُ، الْمُسْتَغِيْثُ الْمُسْتَجِيْرُ...

"I am the one who is afflicted, the one who is in need, the one who is crying out for help, the one who is seeking refuge..."

And became a follower of his Sunnah in this regard. Rasūlullāh ﷺ was *maʿsūm*, yet he made this *duʿā'* so that the *ummah* may learn the way

of making *duʿā'*. Had Rasūlullāh ﷺ not demonstrated it practically and merely sufficed by saying it, no one would have learnt the special way of making *duʿā'*. After he taught it to the *ummah*, it became easy for everyone and they all learnt the way to tread the path to Allāh ﷻ. Had it not been like this, we would have heard about the virtue of acknowledging our sins, but we would not have been able to practise it in the proper manner. The most we would have done is acknowledged our sins verbally without really understanding the effect it ought to have on our heart. When Rasūlullāh ﷺ personally beseeched Allāh ﷻ and showed us the way to acknowledge our sins, we learnt that all people – whether sinners or obedient servants, worshippers or criminals – must acknowledge their sins. This is essential on everyone. They must humble themselves totally and display absolute servitude and submission. This is also a unique Sunnah of Rasūlullāh ﷺ. A poet says:

"Had Rasūlullāh ﷺ not led the way to the rank of *haqq al-yaqīn* (absolute certainty), no one would have had an inkling about it."

Without doubt, had Rasūlullāh ﷺ not taught it to us practically, no one would have understood it. It is a difficult thing especially for the worshippers (*ʿābidīn*) to worship [Allāh ﷻ] and consider themselves to be sinners. This is very difficult to do. It is easy for a needy and poor person to consider himself to be poor. But very difficult for a wealthy person to consider himself to be poor.

In like manner, it is very easy for a sinner to consider himself to be a sinner. But it is not easy for a worshipper to consider himself to be a sinner and to disregard his worship. This is only possible when a person acquires absolute recognition (*maʿrifat*) of Allāh ﷻ, and he realizes that no worship of his is worthy of Allāh's grand status. Only when Allāh's ﷻ grace is with him, all this becomes easy for him.

The Prophets عليهم السلام acknowledged sins despite being *maʿṣūm*

The Prophets عليهم السلام possess perfect recognition of Allāh ﷻ. Despite their worship, extremely close proximity to Him, and in fact, being *maʿṣūm* (divinely protected from sin); they considered themselves to be in absolute need of Allāh ﷻ and embodiments of sin. In order to teach and tutor others, they would engage in *duʿā's* of this nature and thereby display their humility, servitude, submission and absolute need of Allāh ﷻ.

Those who are the true inheritors of the Prophets عليهم السلام also follow in this way. They are totally obedient to Allāh ﷻ and spend all their time in His obedience and in doing actions which earn His pleasure. But they still consider themselves to be sinners. On the other hand, we are engrossed in sin by day and night, but unfortunately, we do not think of Hell even by mistake. This is similar to the hypocrites who will certainly go to Hell, as stated by Allāh ﷻ:

إِنَّ الْمُنَافِقِيْنَ فِي الدَّرْكِ الأَسْفَلِ مِنَ النَّارِ

"The hypocrites will certainly be in the lowest level of the Hell-fire."

But the hypocrites do not even think of this danger. On the other hand, a true believer is free from hypocrisy but is always fearful of it.

Nevertheless, the real effect of obedience is that a person does not see any good in himself. If humility, submission and servitude are not found in him after engaging in acts of obedience, one can deduce that there is no sincerity in his worship.

This is one disease which afflicts pious people – whether *ʿālim* or an *ʿābid* – and which causes all their outward piety to be to their detriment. A person becomes so intoxicated by knowledge and worship that it causes him to give no consideration whatsoever to himself nor to others. In fact, it becomes harmful to him and to others as well. I now support this by quoting the statement of Hadrat Sayyidunā Rifāʿī *rahimahullāh* who was a senior ascetic of his time.

After enumerating the levels of the *fuqahā'* (jurists), he says: "The third level is of the person who solves difficult problems. He has knowledge of the intricacies of the traditional and rational sciences, and he dived into the oceans of debating. In doing all this, he had the intention of

acquiring knowledge and helping the Sharīʿah. However, he is deceived by his knowledge, his knowledge causes him to consider others to be inferior to him. When he stands up to defend the Sharīʿah on a particular issue and someone objects to his proofs, he is overpowered by the need to defend his self, goes beyond the limits in this regard, brings proofs against his opposition, speaks ill of him, goes to the extent of labelling him a *kāfir*, criticizes him, and attacks him like an animal when it pounces on its prey. He gives no consideration whatsoever to the limits set by the Sharīʿah – neither over his own self, nor in his treatment of his opposition."

This is what I want to demonstrate here. Such a person gives no consideration to himself nor to his opposition. In short, it is harmful to him and to others as well.

Shaykh Saʿdī *rahimahullāh* relates an incident in his *Bustān* which is similar to the incident mentioned in the Hadīth. I would like to relate it with some explanations. I go to lengths in explaining such points in detail so that you may learn what true character entails and what its benefits are; and what evil character is and what its harms are. You may also learn what our pious predecessors considered to be *Dīn* and what they considered not to be *Dīn*. Unfortunately, we pay no attention whatsoever to the teachings of our pious predecessors. Consequently, just as we were ill-mannered in the beginning, we remain

the same even after spending lengthy periods of time in the company of the *buzurgs*.

The story of a fearless worshipper and a fearful sinner

Shaykh Saʿdī *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* relates this story under the heading: The story of <u>H</u>a<u>d</u>rat ʿĪsā ﷺ and a fearless worshipper.

I have heard from the historians about a man in the era of Sayyidunā ʿĪsā ﷺ. This man destroyed his life by spending it in ignorance and deviation. He was daring, audacious, hard-hearted, and his book of deeds was filled with darkness. In fact, Satan was ashamed of his vileness. This is the description provided by the Shaykh. You will see further on how he became victorious and entered into a pure life which would have certainly caused Satan to fall upside down and to cry all his life for having this person escape from under his wing. This shows that everything is in Allāh's ﷻ control.

This person saw <u>H</u>a<u>d</u>rat ʿĪsā ﷺ just once in his life, and that too, from a distance. But his entire condition changed. It is related further on that <u>H</u>a<u>d</u>rat ʿĪsā ﷺ must have went on countless occasions to the virtuous person, but his end was totally different. The Shaykh continues:

I heard that <u>H</u>a<u>d</u>rat ʿĪsā ﷺ was returning from the forest when he passed by a place of worship of a worshipper (*ʿābid*). On seeing <u>H</u>a<u>d</u>rat ʿĪsā ﷺ, the *ʿābid* left his place of seclusion and placed his

head at Hadrat ʿĪsā's ﷺ feet. On the other side, the unfortunate sinner was watching this scene from a distance and was quite perplexed. He became restless like a moth when it sees light and brightness. He felt ashamed in his heart and was staring at them with remorse just as a poor person looks at a wealthy person with remorse. The Shaykh then goes into some detail and says: This sinner began crying profusely and was saying:

"O Allāh! Pardon me my sins because if these sins remain with me on the day of Resurrection, they will be extremely evil companions."

This was the condition of the sinner. Now look at the condition of the worshipper:

The old sinner was sitting in one corner, crying and asking Allāh ﷻ to guide him. On the other side, the worshipper whose head was filled with pride was looking at the poor sinner from a distance and becoming annoyed at him. He was thinking to himself: "Why is this wretched fellow following us? He is an ignorant and ill-fated person. What do I have to do with him."

The Shaykh then quotes his statement which he made out of utter pride and haughtiness:

"I am annoyed by his pitiful sight because I fear some of his fire falling onto me. O Allāh! When the entire world gathers on the field of

Resurrection for the accounting of deeds, do not cause me to rise with this sinner."

Look! This is the same condition regarding which Sayyidunā Rifāʿī *rahimahullāh* said: "Man does not take his own self into consideration nor of his opposition." Here too, the fearless worshipper did not take his own self into consideration. He was filled with pride and looked down on the sinner. He did not consider the sinner and blurted whatever came to his mind. The evil of all this is obvious. Shaykh Saʿdī *rahimahullāh* continues:

The worshipper was engrossed in these thoughts when revelation came to ʿĪsā ﷺ in which Allāh ﷻ said: "Whether the person is an *ʿālim* or a *jāhil* (an ignorant person), the *duʿā'* of both is accepted in My court. I have pardoned his [the sinner's] evils and I shall convey him to Paradise by virtue of My mercy. If the worshipper feels it below his dignity to be with him in Paradise, tell him he should not feel any humiliation on the day of Resurrection because I will convey him [the fearful sinner] to Paradise and him [the fearless worshipper] to Hell. This is because the sinner's heart has been reduced to blood due to his pain and anguish. If the worshipper is proud about his worship, does he not know that humility and submission is far better than pride and haughtiness in the court of the All-Independent [Allāh]!?"

In other words: The worshipper was intoxicated in his pride when Allāh ﷻ sent revelation to Hadrat ʿĪsā ﷺ saying: If this person is an *ʿālim*, so what?

And if this person is a *jāhil*, so what? I have accepted the *du'ā'* of both. This was the *du'ā'*:

"O Allāh! Pardon me my sins because if these sins remain with me on the day of Resurrection, they will be extremely evil companions."

Allāh ﷻ pardoned the sinner his evil deeds and admitted him into Paradise solely out of His grace and generosity. Allāh ﷻ said: If this worshipper feels it below his dignity to live with him in Paradise, tell him he must not worry in the least about such an indignity. I will convey the sinner to Paradise and I will cast him into Hell. This is because the poor sinner had completely obliterated himself with repentance, while the worshipper relied on his worship. Does he not know even this much that servitude and submission is better than pride and self-ego in the court of the All-Independent [Allāh]!?

The Shaykh continues:

The door of Hell are opened from before hand for the person whose external is good and internal is wicked. Hell is waiting for him. And so, there is no need for a key to open the doors of Hell. In Allāh's ﷻ court, humility and submission is better than obedience accompanied with self-ego. If you considered yourself to be virtuous, you have committed a vile evil because there is no self-ego in Allāh's divinity. If you possess any intelligence, do not brag about your greatness because every horseman cannot take the ball forward on the

jaulāngāh (a place of exercise for horses). The person who considers himself to be the core of the pistachio should know that he is absolutely nothing. Such a person is worthless. He is like an onion which is made up of layers upon layers of peel [having no core whatsoever]. Worship which creates self-ego is of no benefit. Instead, when a person fulfils an act of obedience, he must seek pardon for his shortcomings. Look at this worshipper! He did not know this fact, that is why he could not receive the fruits of his worship. His relationship with Allāh ﷻ may have been correct [by virtue of being a worshipper], but his relationship with the creation was wrong because he was filled with pride.

The Shaykh now issues a warning:

The statements of intelligent people are remembered. O Saʿdī, you too should remember this one fact: The sinner who fears Allāh, who trembles and shivers on account of his sins, and has his sight solely on Allāh ﷻ for the forgiveness of his sins; is better than the worshipper who is ostentatious about his worship.

I related this entire story solely to convey this last couplet:

"The sinner who fears Allāh ﷻ is better than the worshipper who does acts of worship for show."

The benefits of this story

I would like to provide some details in this regard. Shaykh Saʿdī *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* provides a comparison. The sinner understood *sulūk* better than the worshipper because the purpose of worship is for a person to acquire the recognition (*maʿrifat*) of Allāh ﷻ, while sin drives a person further away from Allāh ﷻ. The worship of the worshipper was for show and it was further adulterated by pride. His worship therefore became a means of driving him away from Allāh ﷻ. On the other hand, the sinner had the fear of Allāh ﷻ and feared His wrath. He expressed his remorse and cried before Allāh ﷻ. All this conveyed him closer to Allāh ﷻ.

If, after performing an act of worship, a person has a high regard for his worship, and it causes him to become egotistic, one can conclude that he was worshipping his worship and not worshipping Allāh ﷻ. This worshipper is not a virtuous but a wicked person. Although he is from the progeny of Ādam عليه السلام, he is following Satan in this regard because ostentation in worship and pride are the qualities of Satan. Satan was the one who had laid the foundation stone of ostentation and pride. On the other hand, humility, servitude and sincerity are the hallmarks of the Prophets عليهم السلام. When worshippers possess ostentation and pride, it is through the deception and deviation of Satan. Without doubt, this is a difficult and trying time for the worshippers. There is no escape from it except

through genuine emulation of the character, habits and striving of the Prophets ﷺ. This is the meaning of the following couplet:

"O Saʿdī! Don't ever think you will be able to cross the path to Safā without Rasūlullāh ﷺ. The person who follows a path different from Rasūlullāh's ﷺ will not reach his destination."

Satan was rejected from Allāh's court because of his ostentation, pride and jealousy. This is why he deludes the progeny of Ādam ﷺ and tries to instil these qualities in them. I said that Satan had laid the foundation stone of ostentation and pride. Listen to the following in this regard:

A clear text is found about his pride:

أَبَى وَاسْتَكْبَرَ وَكَانَ مِنَ الْكَافِرِيْنَ

"He did not obey and displayed arrogance. And he was from the unbelievers." (Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2: 34)

Now listen to the following with regard to ostentation:

Hadrat Shaykhul Hind's explanation of the above verse

Hadrat Shaykhul Hind *rahimahullāh* says in the explanation of the above verse: "The jinn had been inhabiting the world for several thousand years. They also used to go up to the heavens.

When their corruption and blood shedding increased, the angels, acting on the order of Allāh, killed a few; and the rest were scattered in the jungles, mountains and islands. Satan was a great scholar and worshipper among them. He displayed his immunity from the corruption of the other jinn. He was saved through the intercession of the angels and began living with them. He devoted himself fully to worship in the hope that from among all the jinn he will be the only one who will be able to act without restriction in the land. Furthermore, he continued strengthening his hopes and thoughts with regard to vicegerency on earth. But when the order for vicegerency was pronounced in favour of Ādam عليه السلام, Satan became despondent. On realising the futility of his deceptive worship, he was overwhelmed by sheer jealousy and did what he did, thus becoming accursed." (*Tafsīr-e-ʿUthmānī*)

Maulānā Rūm's investigation concerning this story

Maulānā Rūm *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* says with regard to this story:

"The accursed Satan remained a pious personality and the most superior of believers for thousands of years. Eventually, in his pride and ostentation, he became an opponent and enemy of <u>H</u>a<u>d</u>rat Ādam عليه السلام. He became completely humiliated like dung in the blazing sun. Really, one should never oppose and make claims of equality with the servants of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى. How can it

be acceptable for a person to ride a horse in front of his king!?"

These pious personalities are like kings by virtue of their close proximity with Allāh ﷻ and acceptance in His sight. Making claims of surpassing them would most certainly lead to one's destruction and loss.

Satan is also the founder of jealousy. Maulānā Rūm *rahimahullāh* says:

"If jealousy overtakes you while in the path of truth, you must understand that jealousy is the way of Satan and he is an expert in this regard. He opposed Ādam ؑ solely out of jealousy. In reality, he was opposing his own benefit and good fortune on the basis of jealousy. Even in this path of *sulūk*, there is no obstacle worse than jealousy. Jealousy prevented those who were defective to reach a stage of perfection. They considered it below their dignity to follow those who were perfect – especially the *khalīfah* of his shaykh because he is his contemporary (*pīr bhāi*) and it is against his nature to refer to him. The person thinks to himself: This person is my *pīr bhāi* and is equal to me, how can I go to him? And it is impossible to reach perfection without following one who is perfect. The person who does not have jealousy is most fortunate.

Look! Just as Satan felt ashamed of Hadrat Ādam ؑ, the worshipper felt the same way with the sinner. This is why I said this person is just like

Satan in all his ways. On the other hand, the sinner followed in the footsteps of Hadrat Ādam ﷺ because he had also erred, but see how remorseful and ashamed he was!

Satan's story as related in *Rūh al-Maʿānī*

While relating the story of Satan, the author of *Rūh al-Maʿānī* provides an excellent and brilliant explanation. My heart desires to quote it here. He says:

ثم الظاهر أن كفره عن جهل بأن استرد سبحانه تعالى منه ما أعاد من العلم الذي كان مرتديا به حين كان طاؤس الملائكة وأظافير القضاء إذا حكت ادمت وقسى القدر إذا رمت أصمت. وكان سراج الوصل أزهر بيننا فهبت به الريح من البين فانطفى.

وقيل عناد حمله عليه حب الرياسة والإعجاب بما أوتي من النفاسة ولم يدر المسكين أنه لو امتثل ارتفع قدره وسما بين الملاء الأعلى فخره ولكن إذا لم يكن عونا من الله للفتى فأول ما يجني عليه اجتهاده.

"Outwardly it seems that Satan's unbelief was prompted by his ignorance. Whatever knowledge Allāh ﷻ bestowed him with and with which he covered himself when he was living among the angels was taken away from him. When the nails of destiny are caused to fall, they injure a person. And when the quiver of fate starts shooting arrows, it renders a person deaf. It is as though Satan was saying [by his actions]: The lamp of connection was glowing between us when

suddenly the winds of separation blew and the lamp was extinguished."

"According to one opinion, his obstinacy was the cause of his unbelief. The fame and honour which he enjoyed prompted him to become ostentatious and egotistic. The poor fellow did not realize even this much that had he carried out Allāh's ﷻ order, his value would have increased even more, and his lofty position would have become even more lofty among the highest angels. But the fact is that if Allāh's ﷻ help is not with a person, his self-opinions are the first things which cause him harm."

He says further on:

وكم أرقت هذه القصة جفونا وأرقت من العيون عيونا، فإن إبليس كان مدة في دلال طاعته يختال في رداء مرافقة ثم صار إلى ما ترى وأجرى ما به القلم جرى...وكنا وليلى في صعود من الهوى فلما توافيننا ثبت وزلت (روح المعاني، ج١، ص٣١٢)

"We do not know how many eyes this story caused to lose sleep and how many fountains of tears it caused to flow because Satan was deluded by his obedience for some time, and he was boasting in the sheet of his connection with Allāh ﷻ. But then you know fully well what happened to him after that. Whatever fate had recorded for him was now realized…Laylā and I were climbing the mountain of love, but the moment we met, I remained firm and she slipped and fell."

The above story of Satan is no ordinary story. It is the first story which Allāh سبحانه وتعالى relates in the Qur’ān. There is much guidance in it and many servants of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى were guided by it. As stated by the author of *Rūh̲ al-Maʿānī*: “We do not know how many eyes this story caused to lose sleep and how many fountains of tears it caused to flow.” But this was only until such time when the Qur’ān was read and studied with understanding. We also read these verses but they do not cause the slightest movement in our hearts. Whereas this one story is sufficient to completely uproot evils such as pride and haughtiness from our hearts. Satan was destroyed because of his pride and self-ego, while H̲ad̲rat Ādam عليه السلام turned in repentance, his error was pardoned, and he became an accepted and beloved servant of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى.

H̲ad̲rat Maulānā Thānwī *rah̲imahullāh* used to occasionally read the poem of Khāqānī which deals with this story of Satan and H̲ad̲rat Ādam عليه السلام. Those who were present would thoroughly enjoy H̲ad̲rat’s rendition and they would go into an ecstasy. H̲ad̲rat used to read these lines:

“Satan used to say: I had engaged in abundant obedience of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى and He was closer to me than my heart and soul. Ādam was created from soil while Allāh سبحانه وتعالى created me from light. I used to consider myself to be His close friend. But the fact is that H̲ad̲rat Ādam عليه السلام was His close friend, or it means that Allāh سبحانه وتعالى was unique in His Oneness. Unfortunately, it was recorded in the

Preserved Tablet (*Lauh̲-e-Mah̲fūz̲*) that someone will be accursed. I considered everyone else to be that someone and never thought it will be. Allāh ﷾ willed me to be the accursed one, and so, He made me such. As for the story of Ādam, it was just an excuse. O Khāqānī! Don’t ever rely on your obedience because Satan’s story was related to the people of the world so that they may take a lesson from it.”

Look: We learn from here that relying on one’s acts of obedience and regarding them to be worthy of consideration were actually the attributes of Satan. The same thing was done by the fearless worshipper who considered himself to be religious and looked down on the other person. The same was assumed by Satan. He thought that he will not be the accursed someone, rather it will be someone from the humans or angels. It was he who was destined to be the accursed one, while he considered himself not to be the one. On the other hand, each of the angels who were protected from this feared becoming the accursed one.

The boastful worshipper did not fear the punishment of the Hereafter

The exact same thing happened here between the fearless worshipper and the fearful sinner. The worshipper did not fear being taken to task in the least. Instead, he felt totally at ease in this regard. On the other hand, the sinner feared being taken to task by Allāh ﷾. Shaykh Saʿdī *rah̲imahullāh*

related this story and thereby put a complete end to the boastfulness of worshippers. We learn from this that a shaykh is really a *murabbī* (a guide and a tutor) because it is the work of the *buzurgs* to guide and tutor, and to draw attention to any approaching misguidance.

Understand another point at this juncture. Shaykh Saʿdī *rahimahullāh* is not speaking about an audacious and fearless sinner. Rather, he speaks about the attribute of fear in the sinner. We learn from this that a different ruling applies to a sinner who has no fear. For example, there is a story about a person who was about to die. He addressed his beloved [woman] saying: "O my beloved! I give precedence to your love over Allāh's love." Allāh ﷻ forbid, Allāh ﷻ forbid! This is absolute unbelief.

There was another person who was saying at the time of his death: "This fabric is four rupees a metre and this fabric is three rupees a metre." Allāh ﷻ forbid.

We are not speaking about such sinners. Rather, we are speaking about sinners who have some reservation [about sinning]. When there is reservation, there is fear. When there is fear, there is *īmān*. And when there is *īmān* there is salvation. So his [the sinner's] salvation was actually because of his *īmān*. As for the fearless worshipper, there was a deficiency in his *īmān*. That is why he was ostentatious. He worshipped [Allāh ﷻ] to show people, and so, he did not

receive the slightest share of Allāh's ﷻ *maʿrifat* (recognition). Had he possessed *maʿrifat*, it would have kept him away from such boasting.

The following words of Allāh ﷻ are considered by those who have *maʿrifat*:

فَسَيَعْلَمُ الَّذِيْنَ ظَلَمُوْا أَيَّ مُنْقَلَبٍ يَّنْقَلِبُوْنَ

"The wrongdoers shall soon learn by what kind of turning they will turn." (Sūrah ash-Shuʿarā', 26: 227)

This verse is extremely difficult on the *buzurgs* and it causes them to tremble with fear. Had the worshipper benefited in the least from his worship, he would have never made this audacious statement: "O Allāh! When the entire world gathers on the field of Resurrection for the accounting of deeds, do not cause me to rise with this sinner."

Now you see! Shaykh Saʿdī *rahimahullāh* is not generalizing and is not saying that all sinners are better than all worshippers. Rather, the story refers to the sinner who feared Allāh ﷻ, humbled himself, expressed remorse and regret over his sins, had full conviction in the Hereafter, and made *duʿā'* to Allāh ﷻ with absolute devotion. His *duʿā'* was accepted and he was forgiven.

As for the worshipper, it refers to the one who was proud and boastful, and his worship did not create the slightest humility in him. Shaykh Saʿdī

ra<u>h</u>imahullāh is according superiority to such a sinner over such a worshipper. We know the principle:

كفر دون كفر، ومعصية دون معصية

There are different levels of *kufr*. And there are different levels of disobedience.

There are sins which would convey a person to the Hell-fire. Shaykh Saʿdī *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* is not speaking about the merits of such sins because it is also against explicit texts of the Qur'ān and <u>H</u>adīth.

This verse causes worshippers to cry

Allāh ﷻ says:

أَمْ حَسِبَ الَّذِيْنَ اجْتَرَحُوا السَّيِّئَاتِ أَنْ نَّجْعَلَهُمْ كَالَّذِيْنَ آمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ سَوَاءٌ مَّحْيَاهُمْ وَمَمَاتُهُمْ سَآءَ مَا يَحْكُمُوْنَ.

"Do those who have earned evils think that We will make them equal to those who believed and did good deeds, so that their living and their dying will be the same? It is an evil claim which they make." (Sūrah al-Jāthiyah, 45: 21)

We learn from this verse that the believers and unbelievers are not the same, nor is a sinful believer and obedient believer equal. This verse was revealed in connection with the unbelievers. The author of *Rū<u>h</u> al-Maʿānī* states: Kalbī narrates

that ʿUtbah, Shaybah, and Walīd ibn ʿUtbah said to Hadrat ʿAlī ﵁, Hadrat Hamzah ﵁ and other believers:

والله ما أنتم على شيء ولئن كان ما تقولون حقا لحالنا أفضل من حالكم في الآخرة كما هو أفضل في الدنيا، فنزلت الآية: أَمْ حَسِبَ الَّذِيْنَ اجْتَرَحُوا السَّيِّئَاتِ... الآية.

In their absolute pride and haughtiness, these unbelievers [ʿUtbah, Shaybah and Walīd ibn ʿUtbah] said to the believers: "Your religion is nothing. Even if what you say is true, our condition in the Hereafter will be better than yours, just as it is better in this world." This verse was revealed in reply to their claim.

The author of *Rūh al-Maʿānī* comments:

يستنبط منها تبائن حالي المؤمن العاصي والمؤمن الطائع

Although this verse was revealed in connection with the believers and unbelievers – i.e. they cannot be equal – the condition of a sinful believer and obedient believer can be gauged from it. That is, the two cannot be equal. The author continues: This is why we see many worshippers crying when they read this verse, to the extent that it is known as:

مبكاة العابدين

"A verse which causes worshippers to cry."

A narration states that Hadrat Tamīm Dārī was reading Sūrah al-Jāthiyah. When he reached the above-quoted verse, he read it repeatedly and continued crying until the morning. He was reading salāh near the Maqām-e-Ibrāhīm at the time.

Bashīr the freed slave of Rabīʿ ibn Khaytham relates: Rabīʿ was performing salāh and came to this verse. He continued reading it until the morning.

Hadrat Fudayl ibn ʿIyād *rahimahullāh* used to address himself whenever he read this verse. He would say: "O my soul! How I wish you knew which of the two groups you belong to."

Since this verse could be applied to the righteous and sinful as well, the pious elders used to cry when they recited it. The author of *Rūh al-Maʿānī* continues: "I saw many of those who were deceived into committing sin (many of those who were engrossed in immorality and shameless deeds by night and day) saying verbally and through their actions: 'On the day of Resurrection, we will be better than many worshippers.' This is an indication of their clear deviation and the deception of their souls."

There is no dearth of such people even today. We do not find people crying when they read such verses. When a person qualifies as an *ʿālim* and starts rendering some *Dīnī* services, we find people in every assembly and meeting place

backbiting him, speaking ill of him and finding fault with him. In actual fact, Satan causes these people to have negative thoughts about the person so that people do not learn *Dīn* from him. Satan befriends many devils from among humans for this purpose. These “devils” become obstacles in the path of the truth, and there is no one to say anything against these thieves and robbers.

I am not saying something which is unfounded, but you will not hear it from anyone. What a shameful thing! The worshippers are crying from reading this verse, while the sinners are spending all their time criticizing the religious people and mocking at them.

Allāh سبحانه وتعالى says further on: The people are wrong in assuming these two groups to be equal. How can the obedient and disobedient be the same? By saying this, Allāh سبحانه وتعالى has really wiped off the tears of the righteous people, if not, the sinners would have cast them aside completely. Without doubt, Allāh سبحانه وتعالى maintains the righteous in this world. If not, the sinners would have left no stone unturned in trying to uproot them. The righteous face many hardships in this world. The wretched unbelievers are bent on deriding them, but now the sinners are also following their ways.

The present verse contains much consolation for the servants of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى. They envisage Allāh’s سبحانه وتعالى affection, rejoice in it, and take enjoyment from it throughout the night.

It is totally against the text of the Qur'ān for these deceived people to consider themselves better than the righteous. But how can they understand such texts when their *nafs* (self and ego) is their text!? Allāh ﷻ is saying that the two will not be equal. Now if people, due to their immorality and shamelessness, appear to have overpowered the righteous, and these criminals were to enjoy a superior position in the Hereafter as well, the Resurrection and its purpose become meaningless.

The obedient and disobedient are not equal

Since this Qur'ānic verse makes it clear that the obedient and disobedient are not equal, it is not conceivable to think Shaykh Saʿdī *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* considers all sinners to be better than all righteous people. The comparison which he provided and his commendation of the sinner was based on something different, viz. the sin was accompanied with fear. And this fear is an internal act of obedience connected to the heart through which he gained salvation. On the other hand, the worshipper's worship was accompanied with pride and haughtiness; and this caused his destruction.

Shaykh Saʿdī *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* actually spoke in praise of fear of Allāh ﷻ and His mercy; and against evils such as arrogance, pride and ostentation. The worship of the worshipper was not evil, but his pride was certainly detestable. A <u>H</u>adīth states in this regard:

لا يدخل الجنة من كان في قلبه مثقال ذرة من كبر (مشكوة شريف، ص ٤٤٥)

"A person who has an iota of pride in his heart will not enter Paradise."

Obviously, pride is a Satanic attribute. He was also a great worshipper. But his evil quality of pride prevented him from humbling himself before Hadrat Ādam عليه السلام. Consequently, he was disgraced and humiliated.

The story of Balʿam Bāʿūrā'

In his *Mathnawī*, Maulānā Rūm *rahimahullāh* narrates another story which depicts a person's destruction on account of pride and arrogance. It is the story of Balʿam Bāʿūrā' who was an ardent worshipper, ascetic, and a person whose *duʿā's* used to be accepted. However, he opposed Hadrat Mūsā عليه السلام and this caused not only his greatness to be snatched away from him, but even his *īmān.*

Maulānā Rūm *rahimahullāh* relates:

"Look at Balʿam Bāʿūrā'. People were enamoured by him and accorded him much respect. The sick used to be cured by his treatment through spiritual healing. But when he went against Hadrat Mūsā عليه السلام, his condition became as you may have heard from an *ʿālim* – his *īmān* was snatched away from him and he was also disgraced and humiliated. Such are the consequences of going against the *Ahlullāh.*"

Maulānā Rūm *rahimahullāh* states further on that it was not just a few people who were punished for such opposition. He says:

“Thousands of devils and people like Bal‘am passed through this world. Some are notorious, others are not so well-known. Allāh ﷾ caused his story to become well-known so that it may serve as an example for other similar stories. This is similar to the administrators of the government. When they kill highway robbers in the jungles, they bring the corpses of a few into the city so that the city dwellers may see them and take admonition from them. This serves as a prohibition to them from committing such crimes.”

“There were many thieves in the world like him, but just a few were highlighted. It is not possible to list all those who were punished.”

Hadrat Maulānā Rūm *rahimahullāh* states in another place: There is a line of them on the path. Some have fallen here, others further on. In short, the path is filled with those who were punished. He continues:

“We know that you [Bal‘am] have a lofty position and that you are beloved by virtue of your obedience and piety. But you are not of his [Hadrat Mūsā’s عليه السلام] level. You should therefore not step out of your boundary, and do not go against him. If you were to attack a person who is more accepted and beloved [by Allāh ﷾], you will

be sunk into the bowels of the earth.” (*Kalīd Mathnawī*, vol. 1, part 2, p. 206)

Nevertheless, the sinner was successful by virtue of his humility and servitude, while the worshipper was destroyed because of his arrogance and pride. The *‘ulamā’* state that humility is the basis for all good character. When a person has humility, all his other traits and characteristics are rectified. On the other hand, pride is the root of all evil. When a person has pride, his other characteristics also become corrupt. The pious elders also state that Satan did not really have any love for Allāh ﷿, and the absence of love caused him to vex his pride. This is because pride and disobeying the beloved’s orders cannot co-exist. H̲ad̲rat H̲āfiz̲ says:

“Every building has to suffer defects and deterioration. But the building of love is devoid of defects and deterioration.”

This is why Maulānā Rūm *rah̲imahullāh* goes to great lengths in explaining love [for Allāh ﷿]. He says:

“Love [for Allāh ﷿] is the means to achieving severing all relations except relationship with Allāh ﷿, and removing greed for this world from one’s self. Through love, a person is completely purified from greed and all other evil characteristics.”

The treatment for evil characteristics

In explaining the above, Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* said: "There are two treatments for evil characteristics: (1) Individual. This means that each evil characteristic must be treated separately. This is explained in *Ihyā' al-ʿUlūm* and other books, and it is known as the way of *sulūk*. (2) Collective. Evil characteristics are treated through *dhikr wa shughl* (remembrance of Allāh ﷻ and other spiritual exercises) or as instructed by a *shaykh-e-kāmil*. Love for Allāh ﷻ is created in the heart and when it supersedes everything, the person's self and ego will wane, and all the evil characteristics which resulted from his ego and claims of greatness will be removed. This is known as the way of *jadhb*. Although the first treatment is not fraught with danger, it is lengthy. Although the second treatment is dangerous, it is quick. Each shaykh has his own inclination."

Maulānā Rūm *rahimahullāh* prefers the second treatment, and so he instructs it, encourages it, and speaks in praise of it. He says:

"O love! It is through you that our thoughts are set right, and our illnesses treated. The urge for pride and fame are repulsed through you." This means, as opposed to other evil characteristics, it has a special way of repulsing pride and desire for fame. This is because lowering and effacing one's self is essential for love. And pride and self-effacement cannot co-exist.

So the way of *jadhb* is to create love for Allāh ﷻ through *dhikr*. When love is created, it casts out all the evil characteristics from the heart. This is the consequence of *'ishq-e-kāmil* (perfect and absolute love for Allāh ﷻ). In other words, when love overpowers the whole heart, it casts out everything else from the heart and keeps them out. But as long as the love is deficient, the person is not free from danger. Thus, the pious elders consider love to be dangerous when it is on such a level [of deficiency]. But they do not explain the reason for it. After pondering over it, we conclude that it is dangerous because the person has to cross many dangerous situations and conditions. It is difficult for the one who did not experience such danger to understand it.

Consequently, it also results in arrogance and pride in the person, and he also claims to be equal to the *ahl-e-kamāl* (those who reached a level of near perfection). When a person experiences a certain joy as a result of his deficient love, he does not remain within his limits. Instead, he feels he has surpassed everyone in this path. Thus, it is inevitable for such a deficient person to claim perfection. This is a very dangerous situation. It is also incorrect because although he has obtained some love and realizes that he has obtained a certain treasure, he may do so, but he has no right to claim equality with the *ahl-e-kamāl* or to feel he has surpassed everyone. He ought to remain within his boundary and limit. Maulānā Rūm *raḫimahullāh* says in this regard:

"If you are a proud and egotistic person, remain within the limits. Fear Allāh, fear Allāh; do not step out of the limit."

I say that if a *sālik* wants to be safeguarded from this danger, then together with love for Allāh ﷿, he must also have love for *dhikr wa shughl*. This is because if he has a bond and love for it, the path will become easy and free of danger for him. This is why we have to engage in *dhikr* and good deeds in a manner which causes us to love them. Once we love these deeds, we will have love for Allāh ﷿ as well. The people who have love for Allāh ﷿ do not go up to the heavens; they remain here. But they have a special bond and affinity with those deeds. Therefore, the situation and condition will remain dangerous as long as love for those deeds is not developed. This is because love for Allāh ﷿ which is not developed through good deeds is a dangerous love. As for the love which is created through good deeds, there is no danger in it.

When we see people today not reaching Allāh ﷿ through good deeds, it is because they do not have love for good deeds. Since they have no love for these deeds, they cannot develop love for Allāh ﷿. Understand well what I am saying. It is extremely important. Direct love for Allāh ﷿ is dangerous – this is understood by *ahl-e-mahabbat*. But the love and *maʿrifat* (recognition) which are obtained through deeds are not dangerous.

Two categories of sinners

Nevertheless, I was saying that there are two categories of sinners: (1) Those who are audacious in committing sin. (2) Those who are not. Satan was audacious in his sin. Because he lost his own treasure, he made it his habit to lead others astray and to fill them with pride and arrogance. Consequently, he caused these qualities which are most detested by Allāh ﷻ to develop in that [fearless] worshipper [mentioned previously]. There are numerous forms of worshipping Allāh ﷻ. The angels devote themselves to His worship, and there is no one to ask how much worship they fulfil [because it is countless]. This is why the pious servants of Allāh ﷻ shift their gaze away from their own worship even after an abundance of worship. Such a person is known as *faqīr ilallāh* (a person who considers himself in total need of Allāh ﷻ). In like manner, these pious servants turn their gaze away from the faults of others.

After a person acquires Allāh's ﷻ love and *maʿrifat*, and after he engages in His worship and obedience, it is difficult for him not to rely on all this, and to place his reliance solely on Allāh's ﷻ grace. It is difficult to do this. It is not a great feat if a poor person does not consider himself to be rich. But it is extremely difficult for a wealthy person to consider himself to be poor.

Humility and reliance are fundamental merits

The *mashā'ikh* state that two qualities are really excellent in the pious elders, and these two qualities are the sources of all their other merits. One is humility (*tawāḏuʿ*) and the other is reliance (*tawakkul*). This was always the way of the righteous. A poet says:

"According to the Ṯarīqah, it is an act of *kufr* to rely on one's piety and intelligence. Even if a *sālik* possesses a hundred merits, he must place his trust in Allāh ﷻ."

H̱aḏrat Maulānā Thānwī *raẖimahullāh* included this poem of H̱aḏrat H̱āfiẕ *raẖimahullāh* in his *waʿẕ* (admonition, talk). Even if just this one poem was quoted in H̱aḏrat's *waʿẕ*, we could have said that H̱aḏrat explained the Ṯarīqah in its entirety, because it is really the essence of the Ṯarīqah.

Shaykh Saʿdī *raẖimahullāh* also prohibits the above-mentioned reliance on one's deeds. He says in the story about the fearless worshipper:

"The worshipper was destroyed because he placed his trust in his obedience. On the other hand, the sinner pondered and reflected over his sins, and was extremely remorseful. This is why he gained salvation."

You have one person who does not have any good deeds, and so, he does not rely on them. Another has good deeds and places his trust in them. The latter is worse than the former. If a person is externally evil and he goes to Hell, we will not be so surprised as we will be at a person who maintained a good outward condition but it became the cause of his entry into Hell. We learn from this that it is detestable for a worshipper to think highly of his worship. And it is most commendable for a sinner to place his trust in Allāh’s ﷻ mercy and kindness.

The pious elders do not rely on their good deeds even after carrying them out. Rather, they rely on Allāh’s ﷻ grace. This is the meaning of *tawakkul*. *Tawakkul* applies to our obedience just as it applies to our sustenance. In other words, we must do all good deeds but place our trust in Allāh ﷻ. This means that we must understand that we will only succeed if He shows His mercy to us. If not, it is possible for us to be taken to task for the same good deeds.

You have seen the unanimity of H̲ad̲rat Saʿdī *rah̲imahullāh*, H̲ad̲rat H̲āfiz̲ *rah̲imahullāh*, H̲ad̲rat Maulānā Thānwī *rah̲imahullāh* and other *mashā’ikh* with regard to the matter that man must also adopt *tawakkul* in worship. I am saying the same thing as follows: Allāh ﷻ created man for His worship. Disobedience to Him entails idleness. Worshipping Him and relying on it [worship] is akin to *tashbīh* (considering an equal

with Allāh ﷻ), and worshipping Him and relying on Him is *tauhīd* (belief in His oneness).

The pious elders made this *tawakkul* their salient feature and way. Do you know where they derived it from? Rasūlullāh ﷺ said on one occasion: "No one will enter Paradise on the basis of his deeds." Hadrat 'Ā'ishah *radiyallāhu 'anhā* asked: "Even you, O Rasūlullāh?" He replied: "Yes, even me. Unless Allāh ﷻ covers me with His mercy."

When the Chief of the Prophets and Leader of the *Auliyā'* ﷺ is saying this about himself, how can any *walī* or Sufi place his trust on his good deeds!? This Hadīth is the basis of the Sufis for considering it objectionable to place one's reliance on one's good deeds. Rather, they place their trust solely in Allāh ﷻ.

The story of Hadrat Ibrāhīm ibn Ad-ham *rahimahullāh* is related in *Tarsī' al-Jawāhir al-Makkīyyah*. He relates: "One night while I was engaged in *dhikr*, I fell asleep. I was discomforted by this because at the time, I was like those who placed their trust in their good deeds. Consequently, Allāh ﷻ punished me by causing me to miss a few *fard* (compulsory) duties as a result of sleeping. I was addressed internally: 'O Ibrāhīm! Become My servant and you will acquire comfort.'" In other words, when We cause you to sleep, you must sleep. When we inspire to stand up in worship, you must stand up. You do not have any choice in-between these two.

Look! Hadrat Ibrāhīm ibn Ad-ham *rahimahullāh* is enumerated among the senior *auliyā'* of Allāh ﷻ. But he says about himself: "There was a time when I placed my trust in my good deeds." Although Allāh ﷻ removed him from this situation by virtue of his sincerity, we learn that it is not impossible for a person to place his trust on his good deeds after doing them. A person can only come out of Allāh's wrath if he is sincere and submits himself before Allāh ﷻ, and places before him Allāh's ﷻ power, independence and sovereignty.

The pious elders explained various themes in an effort to remove us from this folly, and they endeavoured zealously to explain it to people. Shaykh Sa'dī *rahimahullāh* who is an *imām* in this field writes in his *Bustān*:

"If a person is heedless of Allāh ﷻ and deceived by this world, do not have any hopes of *Dīn* in him. If a person only looks at himself, do not expect him to look at Allāh ﷻ. If you desire status for yourself, do not be like the wicked who look at others with derision. How can an intelligent person ever think he can achieve status through pride and arrogance!? Do not seek a status better than the one in which people say that you are a person of excellent character."

"Just think and reflect! If another person like you were to vex his pride over you, will you ever be prepared to consider him a *buzurg*? You should therefore not do this out of pride, as other proud

people behave before you. If you enjoy a lofty position, intelligence demands you not to scoff at those who are below you. Very often, a person on a lofty position slips and falls. And his place is taken by those who were lying down.”

“I accept that you are pure from faults and you are a pious person. But what right do you have to wrong me? One person is holding on to the cover of the Kaʿbah while another person is intoxicated in a bar. Now if Allāh سبحانه وتعالى wills to make this drunkard into His accepted servant, who is there to stop Him? And if He wills to expel the person who is holding on to the Kaʿbah from His court, who is there to bring him back? Neither does this worshipper have any right to rely on his deeds, nor are the doors of repentance shut upon the sinner. When such is the case, how can any ascetic vex his pride over a libertine, and how can it be permissible for him to rely on his worship?

I quoted the poem of H̱aḏrat H̱āfiẕ *raẖimahullāh* previously:

“According to the Ṯarīqah, it is an act of *kufr* to rely on one’s piety and intelligence. Even if a *sālik* possesses a hundred merits, he must place his trust in Allāh سبحانه وتعالى.”

H̱aḏrat Maulānā Thānwī *raẖimahullāh* used to read this poem in a manner which was really enjoyed by those who were present. The manner in which he read it demonstrated his internal

condition. He would also read the following lines of poetry:

“Do not walk like a heedless person. The caravan of the true men of the path traversed the Sanglāj jungle in an orderly and continuous manner. Do not lose hope because those who drink the love of Allāh ﷻ are able to reach the peak after having been in the pits.”

Hadrat Thānwī *rahimahullāh* used to quote the following poem as well:

“Do not worship Allāh ﷻ like the poor people who do work only if they are paid, because your Master knows exactly how to pay His servants.”

He would also say:

“I fear that on the day of Resurrection the *halāl* food of the shaykh may not surpass our *harām* water.”

These poems are undoubtedly the spirit and soul of *tasawwuf*. Hadrat Hāfiz *rahimahullāh* says:

“The ascetic could not traverse the path safely because of his pride and arrogance. The person who had lost the way entered Dār as-Salām (Paradise) by virtue of his servitude and submission.”

This was the way shown to us by the pious elders of every era. Hadrat Hājī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* says:

"The worshippers may rely on their worship. But a worthless and poor person like me will rely on his crying over his sins."

We do not have the time for all this, but I explained it to you so that if you learn it, you will benefit from it.

Now listen to something more about our previous theme, viz. Hadrat ʿĪsa عليه السلام and the fearless worshipper.

Shaykh Saʿdī *rahimahullāh* relates that when the worshipper looked at the sinner, he said he was very lazy, unfortunate and immature. He also said that he does not want to be near him because some of his fire might afflict him. He added:

"O Allāh! When all the people assemble on the field of Resurrection, do not resurrect me with him."

He said this out of pride. A person does not have pride for no reason; there are causes and reasons for it. Here the reason was his considering himself to be a pious person on account of his worship. He thought to himself: "I am a worshipper. I worship Allāh سبحانه وتعالى by night and day. That is why I am his accepted servant." On the other hand, the condition of true *buzurgs* in Allāh's سبحانه وتعالى court is as follows:

"The *buzurgs* removed *buzurgī* (piety) from their heads."

This means, they do not keep thoughts of piety in their heads. Allāh ﷻ is most independent and sovereign. The angels, whose food is worship, also submit to this rule.

Allāh's ﷻ greatness and independence

Shaykh Saʿdī *rahimahullāh* speaks about Allāh's ﷻ being and attributes in the introduction to his *Bustān*. How excellent his words are! He says:

"Allāh ﷻ places the crown of good fortune on the head of one person, and removes another from the throne and brings him to the ground. The hat of success is placed on the head of one, while the shawl of wretchedness is cast on another. The fire was made into a garden for Hadrat Khalīlullāh [Ibrāhīm ﷺ] while another group [Pharaoh and his people] were conveyed from the river Nile to the fire of Hell."

"If the first is a display of His grace and kindness, the second is a display of His greatness. He sees evil deeds from behind the veil, but He also casts a veil over them through His grace. If He were to unsheathe His sword with His royal authority, even the close angels will be left terrified and speechless."

"If He were to announce His kindness, even Satan would have expectations of salvation. The pious

cast aside their piety in His court which is an embodiment of kindness and piety."

If such is the lofty position of Allāh ﷻ, who is even going to bother about inquiring about your worship? Great angels spend all their days and nights in His worship and still consider it deficient. But this worshipper [mentioned previously] engaged in a little worship and considered himself to be a *buzurg*. This was a proof of his insincerity. A person who is not a *buzurg* but wants to be included among them will make such statements. It is not easy for him to uphold the requirements of *buzurgī* (piety), and so, it is inevitable for him to resort to boasting. Such a person did not acquire any of the benefits of his worship. Worship is actually a bond between the worshipper and the Being who is worshipped. But this person neither recognized his self nor the Being whom he was worshipping. Had he possessed the slightest *maʿrifat*, would he have been so proud and arrogant? Would he have looked down on others? Or would he have looked at his own condition and filled his heart with fear and humility?

Shaykh Saʿdī *raḫimahullāh* relates a story of a villager and the king's army, and explains this point to us.

The gist of the story is that a senior person of a village and his son passed by the king's army. When the son saw the pomp and awe of the army, and the powerful movements of the soldiers; he

also saw how small and insignificant his father [who was a senior leader of the village] became in front of them. He asked his father: "Why are you appearing like a pauper and a servile man here? After all you are also the senior man of the village, and the leader among leaders? Why, then, are you behaving like a restless person who is on the verge of dying? Why are you shaking like a tree in front of the king?"

The father replied:

"Without doubt, I am certainly a leader and a ruler. But my honour is restricted to the village."

Shaykh Saʿdī *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* states further on as a conclusion to the story: The reason for the fear which the pious personalities experience all the time is that they are in the royal court [of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى]. O you heedless person! If you think you have some position and authority, then know well that you are also in the village [and your honour is restricted to it].

I related this story at the point when I said that if the worshipper had acquired a little *maʿrifat*, he would not have thought highly of himself and his own worship. But because he holds it in high regard, we conclude that he did not acquire any *maʿrifat* as yet. The <u>T</u>arīqah means self-effacement (*fanā*). When worship has an effect on a worshipper, he drowns himself in the remembrance of his beloved [Allāh سبحانه وتعالى] and he obliterates his existence in Allāh's سبحانه وتعالى presence.

Shaykh Saʿdī *rahimahullāh* proves this point in a striking manner under the heading, *The story of Karmak shab tāb*. He says:

"You may have seen an insect which gives off a light at night, flying around in the garden and fields. A person addressed this insect saying: 'O you glittering insect, why do you not appear during the day?' Listen to the intelligent answer given by this glittering insect which is created from soil. It replied: 'I live in the fields by day and night, but my presence is not seen before the sun.'"

Glory to Allāh! See how the Shaykh proves self-effacement with such simple stories. When the worshipper's tongue moved like a scissor against the sinner, it was really because he neither obliterated his existence nor did he get a whiff of *maʿrifat*. Had he acquired these qualities, he would not have made such haughty and arrogant statements.

The reason for criticizing the worshipper

I said it before and am saying it again; the criticism which Shaykh Saʿdī *rahimahullāh* levelled against the fearless worshipper was not because of his worship but because of his fearlessness. The honour and merit of worship is established from the Qur'ān and Hadīth. Allāh ﷻ says:

وَلَقَدْ كَتَبْنَا فِي الزَّبُوْرِ مِنْ بَعْدِ الذِّكْرِ أَنَّ الأَرْضَ يَرِثُهَا عِبَادِيَ الصَّالِحُوْنَ

“We decreed in the Zabūr after the admonition that My righteous servants shall eventually inherit the land.” (Sūrah al-Ambiyā’, 21: 105)

Although it is said that the “land” refers to the land of Paradise, Hadrat Ibn ‘Abbās ﷺ states:

المراد بها أرض الدنيا يرثها المؤمنون ويستولون عليها وهو قول الكلبي وأيد بقوله تعالى: لَيَسْتَخْلِفَنَّهُمْ فِي الأَرْضِ

It refers to the land of earth which will be inherited by the believers and ruled by them. Al-Kalbī is also of the same opinion, and he supports it with this verse: “He [Allāh ﷻ] shall certainly make them deputies on earth.”

Nevertheless, Allāh ﷻ states further on:

إِنَّ فِيْ هَذَا لَبَلاَغًا لِّقَوْمٍ عَابِدِيْنَ وَمَا أَرْسَلْنٰكَ إِلاَّ رَحْمَةً لِّلْعٰلَمِيْنَ

“It is in this that the people who [truly] worship [Allāh] reach their objective. We have not sent you but as a mercy to the worlds.” (Sūrah al-Ambiyā’, 21: 106-107)

Who will inherit the land?

Look! The above verse states that *balāgh* (reaching their objective, and sufficiency) is specifically for those who truly worship [Allāh ﷻ]. We learn from this that if you want to inherit the land, you must engage in Allāh’s worship. It shows the merit of worship. It refers to worship

through which the worshipper desires Allāh's ﷻ pleasure. Not a worship which he continues doing while his evil condition also becomes worse – as was the case with this fearless worshipper [mentioned in the beginning]. His worship is not meritorious because it was not for Allāh ﷻ, it was for the creation, and he was worshipping his worship [and not worshipping Allāh ﷻ]. This is why Shaykh Saʿdī *rahimahullāh* referred to him as one who worships his worship. Such people develop a self-ego, and so, the more worship they engage in, the worse their character becomes. If people were to praise them, they become even worse. When people have been deceived by their ostentatious worship and are now at their beck and call, they do not think of their own internal wickedness. Instead, they consider themselves to be pious, whereas, their bond with Allāh ﷻ has been severed.

A poet says:

"When he sees people showing high regard to him, he becomes proud and loses control over his self."

He becomes a manifestation of the couplet:

"He is an overworked wretch. He may endeavour the entire night, but he makes no progress whatsoever."

I am saying that the merits of worshippers are established from Qur'ān and Hadīth. Yet, Shaykh

Saʿdī *rahimahullāh* is criticizing them here. The fact of the matter is that they are not really worshippers. There are two reasons for this: (1) They become proud over their worship. (2) Their ostentation and boasting creates stupidity in them. On the other hand, when a person seeks Allāh ﷻ, his intellect is straightened.

An *ʿārif* is an intelligent person

An *ʿārif* is the most intelligent person. The claims which these [ostentatious] people make are to their detriment because people recognize such claims and remain aloof from them. This is obviously harmful to them because it goes against the objective of boasting. But they are also compelled into adopting such foolishness because when they receive nothing from Allāh ﷻ, they inevitably have to resort to such fabrications and futilities. If a person is not honest, he is inevitably a liar. Now how can liars develop conditions like those of the truthful!?

It is stated with regard to Musaylamah, the impostor, that he used to ask the people to include his name in the *adhān* together with the name of Rasūlullāh ﷺ. It was as though he was claiming equality with Rasūlullāh ﷺ. He realized that rejecting Rasūlullāh ﷺ would not be well received, so he added his name to his. This is why the *ʿulamā'* say that if a person is nothing and makes claim to certain merits, then he is the brother of Musaylamah, the impostor.

Shaykh Sa'dī *rahimahullāh* related the story of this person so that you may be able to recognize such a person. When a person makes claims, you must conclude he is nothing. He has been discarded from the court of Allāh ﷾.

Even in this story, the worshipper developed pride over his worship. This was totally against the requirement of worship because it ought to have created humility, servitude and submission in him. On the contrary, pride, ostentation and haughtiness developed in him; and these are the essential ingredients of disobedience. He looked up to his worship, relied on it, and considered himself independent of Allāh's ﷾ mercy. He became proud over his worship. These qualities normally develop in the pious. This is undoubtedly a very difficult point. Only if Allāh ﷾ shows kindness to a person, will he be able to save himself. If not, he will find it very difficult. The *buzurgs* say that it is *kufr* (unbelief) to place one's trust in one's worship. Hadrat Hāfiz Sāhib says:

"According to the Tarīqah, it is an act of *kufr* to rely on one's piety and intelligence. Even if a *sālik* possesses a hundred merits, he must place his trust in Allāh ﷾."

It is an act of *kufr* because man ought to rely on Allāh ﷾ alone, on His grace and His kindness. He has committed an act of the unbelievers by placing his trust on something apart from Allāh ﷾.

An important investigation

Understand one point here. Just as a person relies on his abstinence and obedience, he sometimes relies on his sins as well. In other words, a sinner’s gaze shifts from Allāh’s ﷾ pardon and kindness, and becomes confined to his sin. Consequently, when he looks at his many sins, he is overcome by despondency and thinks that he will never be forgiven. It is as though his focus has shifted completely from Allāh’s ﷾ pardon and kindness. The *mashā’ikh* consider this to be a dangerous condition because Allāh ﷾ says about the sinners:

قُلْ يٰعِبَادِيَ الَّذِيْنَ أَسْرَفُوْا عَلَى أَنْفُسِهِمْ لاَ تَقْنَطُوْا مِن رَّحْمَةِ اللهِ، إِنَّ اللهَ يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوْبَ جَمِيْعًا.

“Say: O My servants who wronged themselves. Do not despair of Allāh’s mercy. Surely Allāh forgives all sins.”

This is the Islamic belief. On the other hand, it is as if this person is saying that Allāh ﷾ can never forgive him. This person is extremely foolish and witless.

Nevertheless, whether a person relies on his obedience or his disobedience, both are reprehensible. A worshipper relies on his obedience because he is not cognizant of Allāh’s ﷾ power to “punish whomever He wills”. As for

the sinner who relies on his disobedience, he is not cognizant of Allāh's ﷻ statement:

لاَ تَقْنَطُوْا مِن رَّحْمَةِ اللهِ

"Do not despair of Allāh's mercy."

Balance and equity demand for a worshipper to be pleased by his worship, but to remain fearful of Allāh's punishment at the same time. In like manner, a sinner may fear his sins, but at the same time he must believe in Allāh's ﷻ mercy and forgiveness. If a sinner possesses this quality, he will be successful despite his sins. You saw this in the story of the fearless worshipper and the fearful sinner.

But there are times when a sinner becomes audacious in his sins. Let alone having any remorse and regret, he becomes boastful of his sins. He commits a sin at night, and relates it proudly during the day. This is known as audaciousness, and such a person will be taken to task on the day of Resurrection.

Nevertheless, Allāh ﷻ teaches us that a pious person must think of Allāh's punishment together with His mercy. And a sinner must think of His mercy together with having fear for Him.

Glory to Allāh! Look at how well he explained the wisdom of the Sharīʿah. It is as though he explained the principle:

"*Īmān* is suspended between hope and fear." (Qamar az-Zamān)

One more point needs to be understood here. In the above story, Shaykh Saʿdī *rahimahullāh* referred to the worshipper as a "fearless worshipper". We learn from this that worshippers are of two kinds, fearful and fearless. Now who is the one who is a fearless worshipper? Shaykh Saʿdī *rahimahullāh* delved into another theme before relating the above story. It is titled: The consequences of egotism and the blessings of servitude.

He gives a word of advice in this regard: "I accept you are free from faults, but do not frown at us who are filled with faults."

This means: If a person is free of faults, then glory to Allāh ﷻ! What can we say!? At the same time, he should not look at the faults of and criticize those who are sinners and are filled with faults. If he abstains from doing this, his piety will be perfected and he will be known as a fearful worshipper. But if he despises and looks down on others while carrying out his acts of worship, he may be called a worshipper on the outside, but he will not be a fearful worshipper. We learn from this that it is easy to be a worshipper, but difficult to be a fearful person.

Consequently, when Shaykh Saʿdī *rahimahullāh* referred to him as a fearless worshipper, it was because of his harsh words and unmannerly conduct with the sinner. We learn from this that when Shaykh Saʿdī *rahimahullāh* prohibited the pious from obstinacy, he followed it with a story of a fearless worshipper to explain this theme further. We conclude that his obstinacy was the cause of his fearlessness, and the cause of the obstinacy was his considering himself to be a pious person, and having a high regard for his good deeds. This resulted in his despising and looking down on others.

A lesson from our pious elders

Glory to Allāh! From these lessons of our elders we learn how lofty the standard of character is! A person who does not commit sins, and is in fact divinely protected from sinning (*maʿsūm*) is not given the right to despise any sinner. His good fortune lies in considering himself to be insignificant and having a high regard for others. This is because one shall be judged according to how he departed from this world, and no one knows this with certainty.

As for deeds, how can any person vex pride over them when a Hadīth states that Rasūlullāh ﷺ said: “No one will enter Paradise on the basis of his deeds.” Hadrat ʿĀ’ishah *radiyallāhu ʿanhā* asked: “Even you, O Rasūlullāh?” He replied: “Yes, even me. Unless Allāh ﷻ covers me with His mercy.”

The fearless worshipper did not know this or did not practise on it. But Rasūlullāh ﷺ taught it to the *ummah* through his words, actions and conditions; and the *ummah* learnt it from him.

Look at the humble and unassuming couplets which Shaykh Saʿdī *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* brought at the beginning of his *Bustān*. Glory to Allāh! Merely reading them creates a certain condition in the reader. The loftiness of Allāh ﷻ and Rasūlullāh ﷺ, and one's own insignificance are created in the heart. He says:

"O Allāh! I make one request through the blessings of the children of Fā<u>t</u>imah. My request is that I must depart from this world with *īmān*. Whether You reject or accept my *duʿā'*, I will be present on the day of Resurrection, my hand will be outstretched, and it will be holding on to the garment of the family of Rasūlullāh ﷺ. O Rasūlullāh, O you who will hold a lofty position in Allāh's royal court! What loss will it be to you if a handful of obedient servants become guests in Paradise through you?"

"Allāh ﷻ spoke highly of you, Jibra'īl عليه السلام kissed your blessed ground, the heavens humbled themselves before your rank and position, and you were already created when Ādam عليه السلام was still between water and soil [still in the process of creation]."

"You were the basis for the coming of the entire universe. The things which came into existence

after you are actually your branches. I do not know what to say about you which will appeal to you because you are far above whatever I say in your praise. The following statement of Allāh ﷻ is sufficient to prove your honour:

لو لاك لما خلقت الأفلاك

"Were it not for you, I would not have created the heavens."

"And Yā Sīn and T̲ā Hā are sufficient for your praises. What can this unqualified Saʿdī [the author is referring to himself] say in your praise? O Prophet! May Allāh's peace and salutations be on you."

Look at the pure theme – that is, the praise of Allāh ﷻ - with which Shaykh Saʿdī *rah̲imahullāh* commenced his book. He then followed it with an emotional praise of Rasūlullāh ﷺ. Each couplet is immersed in respect and humility. Now listen further. In chapter four of the same book, he relates an incident portraying the humility of Sayyid at̲-T̲ā'ifah H̲ad̲rat Junayd *rah̲imahullāh*. This shows the extent of love and affinity which the *buzurgs* had with the life of Rasūlullāh ﷺ. The humility and servitude which was displayed by Rasūlullāh ﷺ was emulated by the special servants of this *ummah*. They proved through their actions that this is the only way. Shaykh Saʿdī *rah̲imahullāh* says:

“I heard that H̲ad̲rat Junayd *rah̲imahullāh* saw a dog in a jungle in Sanʿā. The dog’s hunting teeth had fallen off. It had also lost the strength of its claws which had been powerful enough to catch lions. The dog had become powerless like an old fox. It would either hunt buck after hunting mountain goats, or it would eat the leg of the sheep belonging to the tribe.”

“When H̲ad̲rat Junayd *rah̲imahullāh* saw this poor, weak and injured dog, he took out a piece of some food from his provisions and placed it before the dog. I have heard that H̲ad̲rat Junayd *rah̲imahullāh* would cry profusely and say: ‘Who knows who is the better of us in the sight of Allāh ﷾? I may appear to be in a better position than this dog today, but I do not know what fate has destined for me tomorrow.”

“If my feet of *īmān* do not slip, I will place the crown of Allāh’s ﷾ pardon on my head. If, Allāh forbid, the garment of *maʿrifat* does not remain on us, then I am most certainly worse than this dog, and it is far better than me. This is because even if this dog has a thousand wrongs, when it dies, it will not go to Hell, while Hell is prepared for humans.”

Glory to Allāh! Look at the gist of the story. O Saʿdī! This alone is the way. Those treading the path of the T̲arīqah never looked at their selves with honour. In other words, they did not suffer from egotism and self-honour. Rather, they always chose to be humble. This is why they

surpassed the angels – they never considered themselves to be better than even dogs.

You have observed the beginning and middle portions of Shaykh Saʿdī's *rahimahullāh* speech. Now look at his conclusion as well. It is appropriate to conclude with hope, and so, the Shaykh taught us the way of doing this also. In fact, he makes a *duʿā'* and teaches us how a servant should turn his attention to Allāh's ﷻ mercy. Undoubtedly, the Shaykh was most excellent in this regard. He says:

"My heart is crying out, giving me hope and saying to me that Allāh ﷻ feels ashamed before a grey-haired believer. If it is correct that Allāh ﷻ is shy of me, then it is most astonishing that I am not ashamed of my own self!?"

"Have you not heard about Yūsuf ﷺ? Despite going through so many hardships, and suffering imprisonment, when he became the ruler and reached a high position of authority, he pardoned his family members for their crimes against him. And why should this not be the case? After all, when Allāh ﷻ made him such a handsome man, He also bestowed him with excellent character. Yūsuf ﷺ did not imprison them for their wrongs, and he did not reject their counterfeit money. If such is the level of pardoning of a Prophet, we also have hope in Allāh's kindness. We hope that He will pardon this worthless person solely out of His mercy and kindness. I too have not come with any capital. I have nothing but hope and

expectation. O Allāh! Do not cause me to lose hope in Your pardon.”

Did you see? Rasūlullāh ﷺ taught the *ummah* to make this *duʿā’*:

وَاَنَا الْبَآئِسُ الْفَقِيْرُ

“I am the one who is afflicted, the one who is in need…”

See how well the *ummah* learnt this lesson and practised on it.

What was the reason for Rasūlullāh ﷺ acknowledging his sins when he was *maʿ<u>s</u>ūm*? Now listen to the answer.

The reason for acknowledging sins

Allāh ﷻ says in the Qur’ān:

وَآخَرُوْنَ اعْتَرَفُوْا بِذُنُوْبِهِمْ خَلَطُوْا عَمَلاً صَالِحًا وَّآخَرَ سَيِّئًا

“There are others who have confessed their sins [after] having mixed a righteous deed with another that was evil.” (Sūrah at-Taubah, 9: 102)

This verse praises those who acknowledge their sins and speaks highly of them. Rasūlullāh’s ﷺ rank was one of كان خلقه القرآن (his character was a physical manifestation of the Qur’ān). How, then, could Rasūlullāh ﷺ turn away from acquiring this

merit!? We know that every virtue and merit is found to perfection in the Prophets ﷷ. Rasūlullāh ﷺ therefore stood in the line of the sinners, acknowledged his sins, and cried before Allāh ﷻ and beseeched Him to the extent of fulfilling this duty as well, and surpassed everyone in repentance and seeking forgiveness.

Glory to Allāh! Look at the words which he chose for himself – words which no one else could have uttered. He said: "I am the one who is afflicted, the one who is in need, the one who is crying out for help, the one who is seeking refuge, the one who is in fear, the one who is in awe [of You], the one who admits and confesses his sins. I beg of You the begging of a destitute, I beseech You the beseeching of a wretched sinner, I ask You the asking of a fearful person who has been afflicted by a calamity, and the asking of the person whose neck is submitted before You, whose tears are flowing for You, whose body is humbled before You, and who has submitted himself before You."

Glory to Allāh! Look at the level of acknowledging one's sins and the manner in which he consoled and pacified the sinners through this *du'ā'*! Look at the level of concern for the condition of sinners by saying to them that he is a Prophet for them as well. If he were to abandon them, where will they go to? This is why he included himself in their line and made a confession of sins.

Really, there is no shaykh who will lower himself to the level of his *murīd* and tutor him in such a way as demonstrated by Rasūlullāh ﷺ.

Rasūlullāh's ﷺ teaching was as you saw above. The books relate a unique story of Sayyid Gīysūdrāz *ra*h*imahullāh*, who was a senior personality of his time. The author of *Mir'atul Asrār* writes: I went to visit Gīsūdrāz *quddisa sirruhu*. He gave me some money and instructed me to buy alcohol. I carried out his instruction. He said to me: 'Pour it in a tumbler and give it to me.' I did this. The shaykh drank it, and said: 'You must also drink a glass of it.' I had no alternative, considered the saying:

الأمر فوق الأدب

"An order is given precedence over respect."

And drank it. I take an oath in the name of Allāh ﷻ, the all-knowing, it was pure honey."

Glory to Allāh! What conditions, and what mysteries! The reason behind his actions is explained thus: When the *sālikīn*, in their intense state of *sulūk*, begin to look up to their worship and develop self-ego, they cast themselves into sin in order to remove their self-ego. When these personalities go to such levels to lower themselves, Allāh ﷻ changes the intrinsic nature of things by virtue of their honesty and sincerity.

The *ʿulamā’* explained this and have also written it in their books. But I say: If a Sufi falls into a predicament, what is the need for him to commit an act which is not only against the Sunnah, but also against the Sharīʿah? The Sunnah ought to be followed even in such situations. This is the only way which is illuminated and free from danger. In such a situation, a person ought to be mindful of Rasūlullāh’s ﷺ *duʿā’*:

وَاَنَا الْبَآئِسُ الْفَقِيْرُ، الْمُسْتَغِيْثُ الْمُسْتَجِيْرُ

“I am the one who is afflicted, the one who is in need, the one who is crying out for help, the one who is seeking refuge…”

Will a person who says it verbally and comprehends it with his heart not be able to come out from such a predicament through it? Yes, it may take some time before it settles in his heart, but if he perseveres, *inshā Allāh*, he will come out of such a predicament.

A beneficial investigation

I now ask you: How can it be permissible for even the greatest of *walīs* to commit such unlawful actions in order to come out of a predicament? The way of repentance as taught to us by Rasūlullāh ﷺ is sufficient for us to come out of sin. If we study the Qur’ān, we will learn that repentance is the first of all deeds. Allāh ﷻ says:

اَلتَّآئِبُوْنَ الْعٰبِدُوْنَ الْحٰمِدُوْنَ السَّآئِحُوْنَ الرَّاكِعُوْنَ السَّاجِدُوْنَ الآمِرُوْنَ بِالْمَعْرُوْفِ وَالنَّاهُوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَالْحٰفِظُوْنَ لِحُدُوْدِ اللهِ ؕ وَبَشِّرِ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ.

"They are those who repent, who worship, who are grateful, who remain abstinent, who bow down, who prostrate, who command good, who prohibit evil, and who observe the limits set by Allāh. And give glad tidings to the believers." (Sūrah at-Taubah, 9: 112)

Allāh ﷻ enumerates some of the attributes of the believers and *mujāhidīn*. The first of them is *taubah* (repentance), and worship is mentioned after it. I had stated previously that Rasūlullāh's ﷺ character was a physical embodiment of the Qur'ān. When he saw this attribute [of *taubah*] to be the most beloved to Allāh ﷻ, he remained at the forefront in possessing it. He said:

وَاَنَا الْبَآئِسُ الْفَقِيْرُ، الْمُسْتَغِيْثُ الْمُسْتَجِيْرُ

"I am the one who is afflicted, the one who is in need, the one who is crying out for help, the one who is seeking refuge…"

The reason for surpassing everyone is that the Prophets عليهم السلام surpass their followers in all excellent qualities. So when Allāh ﷻ spoke in praise of those who repent, Rasūlullāh ﷺ placed himself at the forefront of this group. He demonstrated this by fulfilling the responsibility of seeking forgiveness (*istighfār*) and surpassed all in this regard. *Taubah* and *istighfār* are one and

the same. The only difference is that *taubah* is from the heart while *istighfār* is uttered with the tongue.

Since *taubah* is the first of all deeds, it will remain first. If an unbeliever wants to become a Muslim, he will have to make *taubah* first. If a sinner wants to become righteous, he will have to repent. If a Sufi wants to tread the path of the Ṯarīqah, he will have to repent first. In short, whether the person is an unbeliever or a polytheist, a sinner or a worshipper, a Sufi or a *walī*, if he wants to progress, he will have to make *taubah*. If any of these people wish to progress, they will not be able to do so as long as they do not repent. A person can engage in a thousand ways of striving, but if he does not make *taubah*, his deeds will go to waste. When a person does a deed, he inevitably looks at it with regard. This is why the pious elders stress *taubah* and consider it to be the first step for entry in the royal court [of Allāh ﷻ]. They know about its great influence in Allāh's ﷻ court, and so, they embrace it with heart and soul. A poet says:

"Due to arrogance and pride within himself, an ascetic (*zāhid*) could not tread the path safely. Whereas an immoral person entered Dār as-Salām (Paradise) because of his submission and crying [before Allāh ﷻ].

The *nafs* is the cause of everything

The fact of the matter is that the *nafs* is the cause of everything. When the *nafs* is corrupt, it corrupts everything else. Worship is an excellent thing. But once the *nafs* joins in, it corrupts worship. This is why it is necessary to eradicate and break it. Seeking forgiveness (*istighfār*) is the best way to break it. We learn that the original way is for man to continue repenting and seeking forgiveness. My heart desires to quote the following couplet which used to be read very often by Maulwī Mūsā S̲āh̲ib:

"Now we will never go out in search because we have found it. Once we found Rasūlullāh ﷺ, we found Allāh ﷻ."

I say: Just as *taubah* is the first of all deeds, it is also the last because the starting point of a thing is also its ending point. Someone asked a *buzurg*:

ما النهاية؟

"What is the end of the T̲arīqah?"

He replied:

العود إلى البداية

"To return to the beginning."

Thus, *taubah* is not merely a condition, but a stage, and a very high stage. This is why all the

Prophets ﷺ and *auliyā’* held on firmly to it. When the *Ahlullāh* reach this stage and they look at their incapability and shortcomings, *taubah* and *istighfār* becomes their intrinsic and essential condition. This is why Sūrah an-Nasr was revealed shortly before Rasūlullāh’s ﷺ departure from this world. It contains the order to glorify Allāh ﷻ and to seek His forgiveness.

فَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ وَاسْتَغْفِرْهُ إِنَّهُ كَانَ تَوَّابًا

“Glorify the praises of your Lord and seek His forgiveness. Surely He is most relenting.”

In emulation of this Sunnah, the pious personalities of every era encouraged towards *dhikr*, reflection, confession of sins, *taubah*, *istighfār*, and denial of one’s own merits.

The pious personalities paid particular attention to *dhikr, shughl, taubah* and *istighfār*

The book, *Maktūbāt Maʿsūmīyyah*, states:

“Pay particular attention to the *halaqah-e-dhikr* (the assembly of *dhikr*) and be constant in it. Be desirous of solitude and seclusion, and set aside an hour or two for it daily. Spend this time in *dhikr*, reflection, thinking of your shortcomings and slip ups, and engage in *taubah* and *istighfār*. Engage in a denial of all your merits and achievements. Spend your remaining time in

deriving benefit and passing on benefit to others." (*Maktūbāt*, p. 227)

What excellent advice! This means that a *sālik* must set aside some time daily and engage in *dhikr*, reflection, *taubah*, *istighfār*, and in denial of his merits and achievements. Because this is an effective way of removing conceit and self-ego from his self.

At present, the condition of people is to pay no attention to the teachings of the pious elders. They merely want to fall on them. In other words, they have made mere physical closeness to them to be their objective. Khwājah Maʿs̲ūm *rah̲imahullāh* also stated that a person must deny his achievements in this special time which he sets aside. This is because the *mashā'ikh* state that it is contradictory to servitude to ask Allāh ﷻ for achievements [and higher ranks]. In fact, it is disrespectful. The book, *Tars̲īʿ al-Jawāhir* states that this results in a person losing more than what he has achieved. This is because Allāh ﷻ created man and made this world a place of trials and tribulations. He ordered man to do certain things, and prohibited him from doing certain things. Now if he is a true servant, his sole task must be carrying out His orders and asking Him for inspiration and ability to carry them out. It is essential for him to ensure nothing apart from Allāh ﷻ has an influence on his heart. He must endeavour to sever all ties which create a defect in his servitude [to Allāh ﷻ]. This is the attribute of a true servant and slave of Allāh ﷻ. As for

seeking the fruits and rewards of deeds, this is most inappropriate because the matter concerning results and rewards is referred to Allāh ﷻ. If He wills, He may give them in this world, or He may give them in the Hereafter. The servant has no choice in this regard.

If a servant is hasty in seeking the fruits [of his efforts], he has been disrespectful for two reasons: (1) He asked for a reward for his deeds. (2) He considered this world to be the place for the rewards. In other words, he ought to have asked for the rewards in the Hereafter, and not in this world.

If Allāh ﷻ gives something to a person, he must accept it without any hesitation. He may rejoice over bounties on the basis that they are proofs of Allāh's pleasure. But for the person to be pleased when he receives bounties, and displeased when they are taken away from him, this is totally unacceptable because he must be one who is *maslūb al-irādah* (one whose will has been taken away from him). A poet says:

مرادي منك نسيان المراد – إذا رمت السبيل إلى الرشاد

"When I seek the path of rectitude, then it is my objective to forget my objective."

Consequently, Allāh's ﷻ servants remain pleased with Allāh ﷻ in every situation – whether the world is expanded for them or constricted, whether they are able to engage in excessive

worship or not. This is because they do not know where the good lies.

Hadrat Ibrāhīm ibn Ad-ham *rahimahullāh* said: "One night while I was engaged in *dhikr*, I fell asleep. I was discomforted by this because at the time, I was like those who placed their trust in their good deeds." (You see what the shaykh is saying? He is saying: "at the time, I was like those who placed their trust in their good deeds." Because he possessed sincerity, he related his good and bad qualities [he did not conceal his wrong]. But today people think they have accomplished the way of *sulūk*, passed all these trials, and are now perfect. In reality, they have neither come out of the trials, nor have they traversed the way of *sulūk*. The fact of the matter is that they do not understand the Tarīqah in the least, and are merely prattling. I ask you: How is it that you need intelligence to understand the things of this world, but do not need it to understand the way of Allāh ﷻ? This is why there is no progress and the path is sealed. Increase your intellect and understand what is said. Only then will you progress).

Hadrat Ibrāhīm ibn Ad-ham *rahimahullāh* continues: "Consequently, Allāh ﷻ punished me by causing me to miss a few *fard* (compulsory) duties as a result of sleeping. I was addressed internally: 'O Ibrāhīm! Become My servant and you will acquire comfort.'" In other words, when We cause you to sleep, you must sleep. When we inspire to stand up in worship, you must stand

up. You do not have any choice in-between these two.

Man will have to put an end to his own views

Man has to put an end to his own views and opinions because Allāh ﷾ sometimes gets him to commit a sin so that it creates subjugation and servitude in his heart. This is far better than obedience which causes him to become arrogant and haughty. Consequently, a Hadīth states that a person commits a sin but enters Paradise because of it. This means that after committing the sin, he repents, seeks forgiveness, turns to Allāh ﷾ and confesses his sin; and this causes his forgiveness. This is because he remains saddened, broken-hearted, ashamed and embarrassed by the sin; and these are all good qualities. In short, servitude means carrying out Allāh's ﷾ orders and abstaining from His prohibitions solely for the sake of Allāh ﷾. It must not be adulterated by anything else. He must remain pleased with Allāh ﷾ in every condition, and he must not claim any personal achievement.

The book, *Fath Rabbānī*, relates: A person bought a slave and asked him: "What would you like to eat?" He replied: "Whatever you feed me." He asked him: "What would you like to wear?" He replied: "Whatever you clothe me." He asked: "What work would you like to do?" He replied: "Whatever you order me to do." He asked: "Where would you like to stay?" He replied: "Wherever

you order me.” On hearing this, the master said: “You are a strange person! You do not have any desire!?” He said: “O my master! Can a slave ever have any wish before his master!?” On hearing this, the master said: “If only I was to my Real Master [Allāh ﷻ] as you are to me. You are released. I am freeing you solely because of this. I now want you to sit in my place and I will serve you. You are now my master because you reminded me of my forgotten lesson. You deserve to be served by me.”

A poet says:

“May Allāh ﷻ reward you because you opened my eyes and connected me with Allāh ﷻ.”

The author of *Tarsī‘* states that sometimes Allāh ﷻ tests His servant through sin, and the same sin becomes better than obedience after repentance and turning to Him. A Hadīth states:

خيارکم کل مفتن تواب

“The best of you is the person who is extremely repentant after having fallen into tribulation.”

The above person is referred to as a *maftūn* (put through tests and tribulations) because Allāh ﷻ tests him repeatedly through sins. He commits a sin, and repents. He commits a sin again, and repents again. He traverses the path in this way. A poet says:

“This is how we traversed the path: we fell, we got up after having fallen down, and we continued [on our journey].”

Some *ʿārifīn* state that Rasūlullāh ﷺ informed us in this Hadīth that the pious of this *ummah* too will not be protected against mistakes and errors. Instead, they will also commit sins so that they may turn to Allāh ﷻ in repentance and *istighfār*. Allāh ﷻ dearly loves *taubah* and *istighfār*. Since it is dependent on sinning, this is why sins are committed by these personalities. This is the meaning of the statement made by some pious elders:

رب ذنب يكون للمؤمن أنفع من كثير من الطاعات من وجله وإنابته

“Some sins are more beneficial to a believer than many acts of obedience because they bring the fear of Allāh ﷻ and turning to Him after they are committed.”

This causes the person to be among those who repent abundantly to Allāh ﷻ. Consequently, he is included among the beloved servants of Allāh ﷻ because He loves those who turn to Him in repentance. Repentance refers to the one which emanates from the heart, not the one which is uttered verbally.

ʿAllāmah Hirālī says: The soul and Satan instil many whispers in a sinner’s heart. One such whispering is to make him think that if he does not know for sure that he will not commit the sin

again, he must not repent because there is no benefit in such repentance. This is from among the tricks of Satan and the whisperings of one's soul. Man should therefore hasten towards repentance. If he breaks it, he must repent again. Allāh ﷻ loves this condition because it breaks the conceit which develops from doing good deeds.

As for the sin, repentance wipes it off. Eventually, both are put to an end. That is, neither does conceit nor sin remain in him. This is Allāh's ﷻ way of tutoring a person. When he is cleansed and purified in this way, he is obviously included among Allāh's ﷻ most beloved servants. We learn from this that when man does good deeds, he most certainly develops self-conceit; and this has to be removed. Conceit which comes from good deeds cannot be removed unless the person sees himself involved in sin. And so, the sin puts an end to his conceit. As for the sin itself, Allāh ﷻ promulgated repentance for it. When man repents with sincerity, and fear and repentance develop in his heart, the sin is pardoned. This is what breaks the back of the *auliyā'*. In other words, these personalities are intent on not committing a sin, but Allāh ﷻ wants them not to look at their good deeds. That is why sins are committed by them as well.

Although they are also able to turn to Allāh ﷻ through good deeds, there is no fear in it. That is why man suffers from conceit and other similar illnesses. As opposed to the repentance which sinners are bestowed with after committing a sin;

it contains an element of fear as well. This turning to Allāh ﷿ is better than the former. It is really very difficult for a person to do a good deed which causes him to think he is fulfilling his dues to Allāh ﷿ and to still have fear for Him. This is because he experiences a certain joy and satisfaction from the good deed. This can cause conceit and arrogance, but not fear; except in certain people. This is why the level of the worshipper is below that of the sinner. Not because he engaged in worship, but because he included conceit in his worship.

Similarly, the sinner who has the qualities of turning to Allāh ﷿ and fear of Him is on a higher level than a worshipper. Not because he committed a sin, but because he followed the sin with fear and repentance. This caused him to enjoy a higher rank. Today we do not see any progress in our *īmān* because we are heedless of our spiritual condition. People of the past progressed because they used to monitor their internal spiritual actions as well. Internal actions are such that people think he is devoid of them, while he continues doing them [without their having any knowledge of them].

For example, the fear and turning to Allāh ﷿ [which we mentioned above]. When these qualities embed themselves in the heart, they will not allow the person to rest. Allāh's fear will completely melt his heart, but no one else will know about it. Thus, fear and hope are always found in a believer's heart, and he is able to

maintain a mental balance through them. When good deeds cause any conceit, fear sets right this condition. If he is overcome by fear and despair, hope sets right this condition. You must have heard the saying:

الإيمان بين الرجاء والخوف

"*Īmān* is suspended between hope and fear."

This means: The person must be fearful of Allāh's warnings, and hopeful of His promises. Allāh ﷻ promised Paradise and also warned against Hell. A believer therefore believes in both, and both qualities are found in his heart.

H̲ad̲rat Maulānā Muhammad ʿAlī Maungerī *rah̲imahullāh* was an erudite *ʿālim* and a *khalīfah* of Maulānā Fad̲l ar-Rah̲mān *rah̲imahullāh*. Someone asked him: "Maulānā, how are you?" He replied: "Brother, what are you asking about a believer!? In this world he remains between fear and hope. If a person is between fear and hope, what can you ask of his condition? He can only describe his condition when he hears the good news of his entry into Paradise."

Glory to Allāh! What a scholarly and Sufic reply! The *ʿulamā'* were greatly impressed by this reply. In short, the qualities of fear and hope are found equally in a believer's heart. I received a letter from a person in Mumbai today. He writes – in a poem - his impressions after leaving here.

“Everything is dull, still, hopeless, and silent. Such is the scene of the universe without you.”

This is what he wrote. I say: Brother! If fear and hope are firmly established in a heart and there is a constant conflict between the two, how can a person experience any peace and silence?

The verse which instils the most hope

Allāh ﷻ says:

قُلْ يٰعِبَادِيَ الَّذِيْنَ أَسْرَفُوْا عَلَى أَنْفُسِهِمْ لاَ تَقْنَطُوْا مِن رَّحْمَةِ اللهِ، إِنَّ اللهَ يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوْبَ جَمِيْعًا.

"Say: O My servants who wronged themselves. Do not despair of Allāh's mercy. Surely Allāh forgives all sins."

The above verse prohibits despair and losing hope. In other words, it orders us to have hope. When a prohibition is made, an order of its opposite is made. And when an order is issued, a prohibition of its opposite is made. So look at the grace and kindness of Allāh ﷻ! He orders the sinners to have hope and prohibited them from despair. The *'ulamā'* state: Just as it is *kufr* to be fearless of Allāh ﷻ, in like manner, it is *kufr* to despair of His mercy. Maulānā Rūm *rahimahullāh* says: "Allāh ﷻ chopped off the neck of despair."

This is why the *mashā'ikh* refer to the above verse to be the one which instils the most hope. The *Maktūbāt-e-Ma'sūmīyyah* provides a wonderful explanation in this regard. We are quoting it here. But we are first quoting a captivating question and answer.

"The Prophets عليهم السلام are on the level of *radā* (Allāh's pleasure). What does this verse mean:

وَلَسَوْفَ يُعْطِيْكَ رَبُّكَ فَتَرْضَى

"Your Lord shall certainly give you, and so, you will become pleased." (Sūrah ad-Duhā, 93: 5)

There are two types of *radā*: (1) One which is experienced before a bestowal [or gift]. This is enjoyed by the Prophets عليهم السلام all the time. Whether a gift is given or not, whether they are enjoying a bounty or not, the *radā* is the same. In other words, these great personalities are fully satisfied with whatever they received and whatever was destined for them. (2) The other will be on the day of Resurrection. When Rasūlullāh ﷺ will see all the countless bounties and gifts, he will say: 'O Allāh! Enough, enough. I am pleased.'"

I am now quoting what I initially intended:

"It is said that Hadrat Imām Muhammad Bāqir said: 'You, people of Iraq, say that the verse 'Do not despair of Allāh's mercy' instils the most hope. On the other hand, we, the *ahl-e-bayt* (the family of Rasūlullāh ﷺ), are of the opinion that the verse 'Your Lord shall certainly give you, and so, you will become pleased', instils more hope. This is because Rasūlullāh ﷺ will not be pleased as long as a single follower of his remains in Hell.' I say: We can make both verses conform with each other by saying that the first verse 'Do not despair of Allāh's mercy' applies more to people in general, while the second verse - 'Your Lord shall certainly give you, and so, you will become

pleased' – applies to the *ummah* of Mu<u>h</u>ammad ﷺ."

Now you see, there is a difference of opinion as regards which verse instils more hope. Someone says it is 'Do not despair of Allāh's mercy', others say it is: 'Your Lord shall certainly give you, and so, you will become pleased". And did you see the excellent manner in which the Shaykh correlated the two by saying that the first is for people in general (i.e. for people of all nations), while the second is specifically for the *ummah* of Rasūlullāh ﷺ.

The verse means: Allāh ﷻ is saying to Rasūlullāh ﷺ that he must not worry. Allāh ﷻ will soon bestow him with numerous bounties and favours – so many that he will be pleased with them. So this verse instils more hope because it promises to please Rasūlullāh ﷺ. Obviously, how can he be pleased if even a single member of his *ummah* is in Hell? After all, he has intense love and affection for his *ummah*. It is far-fetched for him to remain pleased if even a single member of his *ummah* is in Hell. A poet says:

ألم يرضك الرحمن في سورة الضحى

فحاشاك أن ترضى وفينا معذّب

"Did the Merciful [Allāh ﷻ] not promise to please you in Sūrah a<u>d</u>-<u>D</u>u<u>h</u>ā? It is far-fetched for you to be pleased while a single one of us is being punished in Hell."

Glory to Allāh! What excellent words! They are real eye-openers for the *'ulamā'*, and instil consolation in the entire *ummah*.

The verse which instils the most fear

I now read another verse to you. Allāh ﷻ says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ آمَنُوْا لاَ تَأْكُلُوا الرِّبٰو أَضْعَافًا مُّضٰعَفَةً وَّاتَّقُوا اللهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُوْنَ. وَاتَّقُوا النَّارَ الَّتِيْ أُعِدَّتْ لِلْكٰفِرِيْنَ.

"O believers! Do not devour interest doubling and re-doubling it. fear Allāh so that you may prosper. Beware of that Fire which has been prepared for the unbelievers." (Sūrah Āl 'Imrān, 3: 130-131)

The commentary, *Rūh̲ al-Ma'ānī*, states that Imām A'z̲am [Abū H̲anīfah] *rah̲imahullāh* said: This verse instils the most fear because it warns the believers who devour interest of the Fire which has been prepared for the unbelievers. They will enter it if they do not abstain from Allāh's ﷻ prohibitions. Just as the verse "Do not despair of Allāh's mercy" instils the most hope, the above verse instils the most fear. You are very happy at finding the verse which instils the most hope, now take the one which instils the most fear.

The mention of fear and hope in the Qur'ān is gauged from the above. We continue reading the Qur'ān but we do not know whether it has anything to do with *sulūk* and *tas̲awwuf* or not. Fear and hope are both attributes of the heart.

When the *ʿulamā'* say that a particular verse instils the most hope or the most fear, our hearts must experience these feelings when we read such verses. If they have no effect on our hearts, what is the use in referring to them as the ones which instil the most fear or most hope?

Presence of heart when reading the Qur'ān

A believer ought to have presence of heart when reading the Qur'ān. He must ponder over what he is reading and whose speech he is reading. Especially so when he comes across such verses, he must strengthen his attention and focus, and read them with full presence of heart. He must endeavour to influence his heart with these feelings [of fear and hope].

If it does not have the desired effect on his heart by reading it once, he must read it a second and a third time. He must not proceed until he feels some effect of the verse in his heart. Allāh ﷻ says further on:

وَسَارِعُوْآ إِلىٰ مَغْفِرَةٍ مِّنْ رَّبِّكُمْ وَجَنَّةٍ عَرْضُهَا السَّمٰوٰتُ وَالأَرْضُ لا أُعِدَّتْ لِلْمُتَّقِيْنَ.

"Hasten towards forgiveness of your Sustainer and towards Paradise whose breadth is the heavens and the earth - prepared for the pious." (Sūrah Āl ʿImrān, 3: 133)

There was a person who was considered to be a Muslim according to the British. He used to say: "Allāh ﷻ caused Hadrat Hājirah *radiyallāhu ʿanhā*

to run between Safā and Marwah, and thereby caused the rest of the people to run between these two mountains until the Resurrection (i.e. he made the *saʿy* obligatory in the hajj).”

I said to him: “You are looking at this one verse, but you are not looking at the verse wherein Allāh ﷾ says:

وَسَارِعُوْا إِلَى مَغْفِرَةٍ مِّنْ رَّبِّكُمْ...

“Hasten towards forgiveness from your Lord…”

In this verse, Allāh ﷾ asks us to run towards forgiveness and Paradise. Here it refers to the means of acquiring forgiveness and Paradise, i.e. good deeds.

Hadrat ʿAlī ﵁ says: Hasten towards the fulfilment of compulsory duties.

Ibn ʿAbbās ﵁ says: Hasten towards Islam.

Abū al-ʿĀliyah says: Hasten towards *hijrah* (emigration).

Anas ibn Mālik ﵁ says: Hasten towards the *takbīr-e-ūlā* (first *takbīr* at the beginning of salāh).

Saʿīd ibn Jubayr says: Hasten towards the fulfilment of acts of obedience.

Hadrat Yamān says: Hasten towards the five salāhs.

Hadrat Dahhāk says: Hasten towards jihād.

Hadrat 'Ikramah رضي الله عنه says: Hasten towards repentance.

Obviously, all the above meanings are included because they are all good deeds. The above verse mentions forgiveness first, and then Paradise. This is because forgiveness entails *takhliyah* (emptying one's self of sins) and Paradise entails *tahliyah* (embellishing one's self). And *takhliyah* precedes *tahliyah*. Another reason could be that forgiveness will be the cause of entry into Paradise. The word *Rabb* (Lord) is used in this verse and it is apposed (*mudāf*) to the addressees [you] in order to display additional kindness and affection.

The background to the revelation of this verse: The Sahābah رضي الله عنهم said on one occasion: "O Rasūlullāh! The Banī Isrā'īl are more honourable than us in the sight of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى because when anyone from among them committed a sin, the sin and its punishment would be written on his door the next morning." Rasūlullāh ﷺ remained silent. The above verse was revealed. Allāh سبحانه وتعالى says further on:

وَالَّذِيْنَ إِذَا فَعَلُوْا فَاحِشَةً أَوْ ظَلَمُوْآ أَنْفُسَهُمْ ذَكَرُوا اللهَ فَاسْتَغْفَرُوْا لِذُنُوْبِهِمْ ص وَمَنْ يَّغْفِرُ الذُّنُوْبَ إِلاَّ اللهُ قف وَلَمْ يُصِرُّوْا عَلى مَا فَعَلُوْا وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُوْنَ

"Those who, when they commit an open sin or commit an evil to themselves, they remember

Allāh and seek forgiveness for their sins. And who is there that forgives sins except Allāh? And they do not persist in what they have done while they know." (Sūrah Āl 'Imrān, 3: 135)

The traditions also state with regard to the above verse: Rasūlullāh ﷺ had established brotherhood (*mu'ākhāt*) between two persons, and so, they would always remain together. On one occasion, one of them joined Rasūlullāh ﷺ for jihād, and appointed the other to remain behind and see to the needs of his family. In the absence of his friend, the one who remained behind committed a minor sin. Consequently, he went out into the desert and fields, repenting to Allāh ﷻ for his sin. His friend eventually returned from the jihād and went out in his search. He found him in prostration in one place, and he was saying: "O Allāh! I committed a major sin. I broke the trust which my brother placed in me." His brother asked him to get up and said: "Come, let us go to Rasūlullāh ﷺ and you can ask him to make *du'ā'* for your forgiveness. Hopefully, Allāh ﷻ will provide a way out." They returned to Madīnah Munawwarah when it was the time of *'asr*. On the other side, Hadrat Jibra'īl عليه السلام came with the acceptance of his repentance. In other words, he read this verse to Rasūlullāh ﷺ:

وَالَّذِيْنَ إِذَا فَعَلُوْا فَاحِشَةً...

"Those who, when they commit an open sin..."

Hadrat ʿUmar ﷺ asked: "O Rasūlullāh! Is this specifically for him or does it apply to everyone?" Rasūlullāh ﷺ replied: "It applies to everyone."

It is related that when this verse was revealed, Satan summoned his armies, began pouring sand on his head, and was screaming out in regret. He continued in this way until all his armies from all directions came to him and asked: "O our master! What is troubling you?" He replied: "Do not ask anything. A certain verse has just been revealed in Allāh's book, after which, no sin will harm the progeny of Ādam." They asked: "Which verse are you referring to?" He read this verse to them. They said: "Master! Do not worry. We will open the gates of desires to them, and no one will seek forgiveness nor will anyone repent. And whatever they do, they will think it to be correct." Satan was very pleased at hearing this, and he was consoled to some extent.

I think this verse instils the most hope

The *ʿulamā'* did not say that the above verse instils the most hope, but the background to it and its theme suggests that it weighed down most heavily on Satan. Look at the extent of consolation and affection it contains for the sinners. If, after committing a sin, they seek forgiveness and repent to Allāh ﷻ, it will be as if they did not commit a sin at all. From the words:

وَمَنْ يَّغْفِرُ الذُّنُوْبَ إِلاَّ اللهُ

“Who is there who forgives sins except Allāh?”

We learn that sinners have no refuge except Allāh’s ﷻ grace and pardon. If Allāh’s ﷻ mercy encompasses everything, obviously, nothing can compete in the spreading of His grace and pardon. This verse instils the most hope because when a servant sees Allāh’s ﷻ kindness and the immense importance of repentance, he will be inclined and fortified towards repentance, and will have no alternative but to repent.

Furthermore, the absolute encompassing of Allāh’s mercy totally uproots any form of despair and loss of hope. Allāh ﷻ says:

لاَ تَقْنَطُوْا مِنْ رَّحْمَةِ اللهِ إِنَّ اللهَ يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوْبَ جَمِيْعًا

“Do not despair of Allāh’s mercy. Surely Allāh forgives all sins.”

The above verse explicitly prohibits despair. This has given the servants of Allāh ﷻ a means to instil hope for forgiveness. Consequently, the pious elders made *duʿā’* on the basis of this verse. Hadrat Shaykh Farīd ad-Dīn ‘Atā’ *rahimahullāh* says:

“I have hopes of Your forgiveness by virtue of Your grace and generosity. You Yourself said: ‘Do

not despair of Allāh's mercy.' After such an order, it is an act of *kufr* to despair and lose hope."

I also say: Imām [Abū <u>H</u>anīfah] <u>S</u>ā<u>h</u>ib *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* had said:

أُعِدَّتْ لِلْكَافِرِيْنَ

"prepared for the unbelievers"

Instils the most fear in the believers. If we look at its opposite, we can say that the verse:

أُعِدَّتْ لِلْمُتَّقِيْنَ

"prepared for the pious"

Instils the most hope.

I actually wanted to show to you that these verses also instil the most hope. But now that this subject has come before us, let me also give you an explanation of this verse because it contains noble character and mannerisms as well.

Noble character

After stating that Paradise has been prepared for the pious, Allāh ﷻ explains who the pious are. Three of their qualities are listed here:

الَّذِيْنَ يُنْفِقُوْنَ فِي السَّرَّآءِ وَالضَّرَّآءِ وَالْكٰظِمِيْنَ الْغَيْظَ وَالْعَافِيْنَ عَنِ النَّاسِ

"Who go on spending in prosperity and in adversity, and suppress their anger, and pardon people." (Sūrah Āl ʿImrān, 3: 134)

The first attribute is of spending – whether in prosperity or adversity, happiness or sadness, or whether they are alive or after death – in the form of bequests. They spend in places where it appeals to them, e.g. on their children, friends and relatives; and also where it does not appeal to them, e.g. on their enemies. Hadrat ʿĀ'ishah *radiyallāhu ʿanhā* relates that she even gave a grape seed in charity. It is related with regard to some pious elders who gave a small bundle of onions in charity. A Hadīth states:

اِتَّقُوا النَّارَ وَلَوْ بِشِقِّ تَمْرَةٍ

"Fear the Hell-fire even if it is a piece of a date."

We are instructed to most certainly give a beggar even if it is a burnt hoof [trotters].

Now listen to what I have to say about suppressing anger. The word *kazm* refers to sealing a filled vessel of musk. The word *ghayz* refers to a feeling of rage upon seeing something which is against one's temperament. There is a difference between *ghayz* and *ghadab*: A person certainly has a desire to exact revenge after *ghadab*, but this is not necessarily the case with

ghayz. Another opinion is that the effects of *ghadab* involuntarily appear on the face, but this is not the case with *ghayz*.

A Hadīth states: If a person suppresses his anger despite having the power to give vent to it, Allāh سبحانه وتعالى shall fill his heart with peace and tranquillity. Rasūlullāh ﷺ said: “If a person suppresses his anger despite having the power to give vent to it, Allāh سبحانه وتعالى shall summon him on the day of Resurrection before all the creation and give him the choice of selecting whichever of the doe-eyed damsels (*hūrīs*) he likes.”

Look at the numerous merits of suppressing anger, and the various rewards which are promised for it. But today I see nothing which surpasses the excessive anger which we see around us. Every person is a king in this regard. They claim that the joy in anger surpasses the most sumptuous foods.

This was Hadrat Muslihul Ummat’s *rahimahullāh* special way of addressing people. It proved to be very beneficial and effective. (Qamar az-Zamān)

Now listen to what I have to say about pardoning people. The pious are those who pardon people. They do not take them to task for the punishment which they deserved provided the pardon does not cause any *Dīnī* harm. Hadrat Hasan said: Allāh سبحانه وتعالى will say on the day of Resurrection: The person who is owed a reward must stand up.

None will stand up except the one who pardoned in this world.

A <u>H</u>adīth states: The person who desires buildings to be constructed for him [in Paradise] and to have lofty ranks should pardon those who wrong him, give to those who deprive him, and maintain family ties with those who sever them.

Glory to Allāh! These were the qualities of the pious. We are not progressing because we do not possess correct knowledge. You too do not possess knowledge of *Dīn*. Now who has the concern to take the responsibility of teaching it to you? I am saying, even you do not have the concern to acquire knowledge of *Dīn*. Allāh ﷻ has prepared Paradise for the pious, but you are not even thinking about it. This smacks of total apathy. We seek refuge in Allāh ﷻ.

Fear and hope

Anyway, the above discussion came in by the way. I was essentially speaking about fear and hope. *Al-<u>h</u>amdulillāh*, we spoke about it to a certain extent. You know that fear and hope are attributes of the heart. Obviously, the person whose heart has fear and hope will have fear about his own self, he will not have the time to look at the wrongs of others. When a worshipper's heart is devoid of these attributes, he starts to look at his own good deeds and the evils of others. This results in conceit and pride in himself. He will reprimand and scold others.

When he sees sinners, he will become annoyed by them. Thus, he has internal pride, but assumes it to be *ghaḏab lillāh* (anger for Allāh's sake). Without doubt, he is greatly confused about the two.

An answer to the objection which could be made at this point is understood from here. That is, the Sharīʿah instructs us to abhor sinners, wicked people, and unbelievers. The *Maktūbāt-e-Maʿṣūmīyyah* states in this regard:

"How sad! The pseudo-Sufis of today are not scared of befriending the atheists and unbelievers. They claim that the way of asceticism does not permit speaking ill of anyone. Glory to Allāh! The Chief of the Prophets and Leader of the *Auliyā'* Muẖammad Rasūlullāh ﷺ was ordered thus:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ جَاهِدِ الْكُفَّارَ وَالْمُنَافِقِيْنَ

"O Prophet! Wage jihād against the unbelievers and hypocrites."

His commendable Sunnah was to be harsh against the unbelievers and to fight them. These are very strange ascetics who have abandoned the way of Rasūlullāh ﷺ. There can be nothing but deviation after abandoning his way. Allāh ﷻ says:

فَمَاذَا بَعْدَ الْحَقِّ إِلاَّ الضَّلاَلَ

"There is nothing but deviation after the truth."

The unbelievers are undoubtedly Allāh's ﷻ enemies. There are explicit texts in this regard. How strange! A person claims friendship with Allāh ﷻ on one hand, and also befriends His enemies on the other hand. If the unbelievers and flagrant sinners were not enemies of the truth and detested by Allāh ﷻ, the principle of *bughd fillāh* (detesting someone for Allāh's sake) would not have been from among the obligations of *Dīn*. It would not have been referred to as the most meritorious way of gaining proximity to Allāh ﷻ and a sign of perfection in *īmān*. It would not have been the means of *wilāyat* (friendship with Allāh ﷻ), proximity to Him, and obtaining His pleasure.

A Hadīth states:

عن عمرو بن الجموح أنه سمع النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم لا يحق العبد حق صريح الإيمان حتى يحب لله ويبغض لله، فإذا أحب لله تبارك وتعالى وأبغض لله تبارك وتعالى فقد استحق الولاء من الله. (رواه أحمد)

Hadrat ʿAmr ibn al-Jamūh ؓ narrates that he heard Rasūlullāh ﷺ saying: "A servant cannot fulfil the right of clear *īmān* until he loves solely for Allāh's sake, and detests solely for Allāh's sake. When he loves for Allāh's sake and detests

for Allāh's sake, he becomes eligible for love from Allāh ﷿."

عن أبي أمامة قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم من أحب لله وأبغض لله وأعطى لله ومنع لله فقد استكمل الإيمان. (رواه أبو داؤد، مشكوة، ج١)

Hadrat Abū Umāmah ؓ narrates that Rasūlullāh ﷺ said: "The person who loves for Allāh's sake, detests for Allāh's sake, gives for Allāh's sake, and refuses for Allāh's sake has sought to perfect his *īmān*."

Another Hadīth states:

تقربوا إلى الله سبحانه ببغض أهل المعاصي والتمسوا رضاء الله تعالى بسخطهم، وتقربوا إلى الله عز وجل بالتباعد منهم.

"Gain proximity to Allāh ﷿ by detesting sinners. Seek Allāh's pleasure by abhorring them. Gain closeness to Allāh ﷿ by remaining aloof from them."

Another Hadīth states:

أوحى الله تعالى إلى نبي من الأنبياء: قل لفلان العبد أما زهدك في الدنيا فتعجلت راحة نفسك، وأما انقطاعك إلي فتعززت بي، فماذا عملت في ما لي عليك، قال يا رب، وماذا علي، قال هل عاديت عدوا وهل رأيت لي وليا.

"Allāh ﷿ sent revelation to one of the Prophets ؑ of the past saying: Say to such and such worshipper: 'Your abstinence in this world

enabled you to enjoy the comfort of not having to bear the burden of earning a living. Your cutting yourself [from everything] and devoting yourself solely to Me earned you honour because of Me. Now what did you do to fulfil the right which you owe to Me?' He asked: 'O Allāh! What right did You have over me [which I did not fulfil]?' Allāh ﷻ said: 'Did you bear enmity towards any enemy for My sake? Did you go to visit any *walī* for My sake?'" (*Maktūbāt-e-Maʿs̱ūmīyyah*)

He says further on:

"The fact is: Love for the friends of one's beloved and enmity towards his enemies is from among the demands of love. A true lover does not have to endeavour to do these two things. Other deeds are done by one's own will. Only then are they carried out. But love for the friends of one's beloved, and hatred for his enemies are automatic and spontaneous. The friends of the beloved appear so beautiful in the lover's eyes, and the enemies of the beloved appear so repugnant in the lover's eyes. This can be gauged in one's dealings with those who are *mujāz* (those who received *khilāfah* from one's shaykh). For example, if a person claims love for someone, his claim will not be acceptable as long as he does not distance himself from his beloved's enemies. In fact, he is not better than a hypocrite." (*Maktūbāt-e-Maʿs̱ūmīyyah*)

Look at the powerful message which he conveys to prove that detesting a sinner, immoral person

and an unbeliever is a sign of *īmān*, and that one ought to meet him with sternness. Closeness to Allāh ﷻ is achieved by staying far away from such people. There is one objection to this. If it is correct, and it is certainly correct as gauged from the above Ah̲ādīth, then what wrong did the worshipper [mentioned at the beginning] do when he looked at the sinner with scorn and a stern face? Whereas the Shaykh had described his as follows: "The arrogant worshipper looked at the sinner from a distance with a frowning face." This was not in praise of the worshipper.

The answer to the above is that both are correct. The narrations of *Maktūbāt-e-Maʿs̲ūmīyyah* which state that one should detest a sinner and immoral person are also correct. But the words of the H̲adīth are:

من أبغض لله

"the one who detests for Allāh's sake".

We learn from this that the required and commendable detestation is the one which is for the sake of Allāh ﷻ and not for one's own sake. The objection which was levelled against the worshipper was because he did whatever he did for his own self. There was no sincerity in what he did. The attitude of a sincere person is different. There is effulgence (*nūr*) even in his anger. He considers the sin to be evil but he does not despise and look down on the sinner. In fact, he

is fearful of his own self; not knowing what his own condition will be. There is no pride and conceit in his demeanour. This was not the condition of the fearless worshipper. Instead, he thought himself to be perfect while he was nothing. His claims about himself gave the impression that he wanted to include himself among the perfect servants of Allāh ﷻ. This is extremely evil. It is not easy for everyone to attain the level of *bughd fillāh* (hatred for Allāh's sake). Here the person was merely imitating the pious, and there is a big difference between the two. In other words, one is a person who is really on a level of perfection, and another is one who makes claims of perfection.

In his *Mathnawī,* Maulānā Rūm *rahimahullāh* explains this through an example. He relates the story of a coloured jackal. A jackal fell into a utensil which contained a coloured dye. When he came out of the utensil, he was now dyed in that colour. He went to his fellow jackals and claimed he was a peacock. The other jackals disliked his claim but remained silent because they had no answer to his outward difference. An old jackal stepped forward and said: "You are claiming to be a peacock. Very well, peacocks sing and dance. Now you too sing and dance for us." When he sang, he spoke like all other jackals, and it was proven to all that he was indeed a jackal.

The Maulānā says: In the same way, there are some people who adopt an external colour [or dye] and make claims of perfection, but they are

disgraced when they are put through tests. Dying one's external self will not work. One will have to dye one's internal self. Do you know what the internal dye is? Allāh ﷻ says:

صِبْغَةَ اللّٰهِ ۚ وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ مِنَ اللّٰهِ صِبْغَةً ۫ وَّنَحْنُ لَهٗ عٰبِدُوْنَ

"We have absorbed the colour of Allāh and whose colour is better than the colour of Allāh? And Him alone we worship." (Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2: 138)

The *buzurgs* say: Dancing [in the above story] refers to love and singing refers to *maʿrifat* (recognition of Allāh ﷻ). A person may be able to dye himself outwardly, but he can neither dance nor can he speak about things related to *maʿrifat*.

What I am saying is that *bughd̲ fillāh* (hatred for Allāh's sake) is certainly a fact, but is there anyone who possesses this quality? There were those who possessed it, but it is very difficult to find it today. Yes, it is very easy to make claims and imitate. The objection which was laid against the fearless worshipper and which Shaykh Saʿdī *rah̲imahullāh* disliked was because it was imitated, and because he was prey to pride and ostentation.

The words which he uttered against the sinner were filled with absolute pride. For example, he referred to him as a wretched person. He said: "What does ʿĪsā عليه السلام have to do with him?!" He also said: "There is no need for the doors of Hell to be

opened for such people because they will be open from before hand.”

The *bughd* (hatred) which is mentioned in the Ahādīth and which was practised by the Sahābah ﷺ was based on absolute sincerity and solely for Allāh’s sake. There is no comparison between the two. The two may appear to be the same, but there is a world of difference between them. Hatred for Allāh’s sake is ordered in the Sharī‘ah, and man can combine it with humility. In other words, it is possible for a person to hate for Allāh’s sake and remain the most humble person at the same time. As opposed to the hatred and anger which is based on internal pride – there is no humility whatsoever in it.

Love for Allāh’s sake and hatred for Allāh’s sake

Imām Ghazzālī *rahimahullāh* has provided a very academic discussion on this subject in his *Ihyā’ al-‘Ulūm*. We are quoting it verbatim.

“If you were to ask me: How can I detest a *bid‘atī* (innovator) or flagrant sinner for Allāh’s sake because I have been ordered to do so while at the same time present myself with humility before him, because this would entail the combination of two opposites?”

The Imām’s reply is: “You are most certainly correct in your thoughts. Not only you, many others were confused in this regard. The reason

for this is that when a person reprimands another for his *bidʿah* or flagrant sinning on the basis of *gha<u>d</u>ab lillāh* (anger for Allāh's sake), it becomes intermingled with self-conceit, and boasting over one's knowledge and piety. In other words, because the two appear to be the same, it causes confusion."

I say: Imām Ghazzālī's *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* words ought to be written in gold. If those who are defective can understand this difference and practise on it, they can become *kāmilīn* (those who have reached a stage of perfection).

"Consequently, many an ignorant worshipper and conceited *ʿālim* will shove aside a sinner who is sitting next to him. His internal pride causes him to display such abhorrence and detestation for him as though he is an impurity which has settled on his clothes. To top it all, he thinks his anger is for the sake of Allāh ﷻ. For example, a worshipper from the Banī Isrā'īl had treated his friend in a similar way." The Imām is referring to the fearless worshipper whose story Shaykh Saʿdī *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* related in his *Bustān*.

I say: The reason behind ignorant worshippers and conceited *ʿulamā'* behaving in this way is that although they may progress somewhat in knowledge and asceticism, they do not acquire lofty and noble character. Instead, they remain in the bottom of the rung in this regard. Their weakness in character results in pride, or

ostentation over their knowledge and asceticism. They do not understand all these things.

If they acquire noble character, e.g. humility, which is the highest form of noble character, and in fact, is the essence of all other noble characteristics; and try to understand it and develop it within themselves, they will realize and perceive their weaknesses and shortcomings. In other words, once they are embellished with humility, and then pride enters them, they will perceive it immediately and they will be able to differentiate between *gha<u>d</u>ab lillāh* (anger for Allāh's sake) and *gha<u>d</u>ab lin nafs* (anger for one's self-ego). This was enjoyed by the righteous of every era. We will provide a few examples further on. Imām Ghazzālī *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* continues:

"Vexing pride and anger to a sinner is confused with *bugh<u>d</u> fillāh* (anger for Allāh's sake). One obviously sees the harm of vexing pride to an obedient person and it is possible for him to save himself from it. But he considers it good to vex pride and display his anger to a sinner and *bidʿatī* because it is similar to *bugh<u>d</u> fillāh*, and we know that *bugh<u>d</u> fillāh* is a commendable quality. Moreover, anger and pride are inseparable because the person who shows anger to another does it with pride, and a proud person certainly shows anger. In short, they are inseparable and appear to be the same."

I say: The Imām said: "One obviously sees the harm of vexing pride to an obedient person…". He

is probably speaking about the people of his time. Nevertheless, we learn that pride is also vexed against obedient people, but it is considered wrong and detestable; and it is possible to save one’s self from it. However, in today’s times, we find people intermingling with each other, and if there is one among them who is more righteous than the others, they treat him as an outcast and consider it to be a most meritorious act of worship. Obviously, if people vex pride against the *ʿulamā’* and *mashā’ikh* who are the means of learning *Dīn* and look at them with scorn, there will be no way of acquiring the *Dīn*. We are seeing the disastrous consequences of this right before our eyes. People are gradually losing contact with *Dīn* because they have abandoned contact with the people of *Dīn* [the *ʿulamā’* and *mashā’ikh*]. To Allāh we belong and to Him is our return.

Imām Ghazzālī *rahimahullāh* continues:

“Since there is severe misunderstanding about the two [anger for Allāh’s sake and anger for one’s self], only the person who is inspired by Allāh ﷾ is able to distinguish the two. This refers to the person who – because of his sincerity and devotion – is given the ability from Allāh ﷾ to differentiate between the two.”

I say: We learn from the above that the person who is inspired by Allāh ﷾ can distinguish between anger for Allāh’s sake and anger for one’s self. It is therefore necessary for people to adopt such means whereby they are able to develop

such capabilities in their hearts. When anger for Allāh’s sake becomes adulterated with anger for one’s self, they are able to perceive it immediately.

The essence of whatever the Imām said is that there is an essential need for sincerity and devotion in our worship, i.e. it must be devoid of anything apart from Allāh ﷻ. This is why the Sharīʿah prohibits ostentation and orders sincerity. Allāh ﷻ does not accept worship without it. It will be necessary for us to understand that the system of education and tutoring is dependent on this [absence of ostentation and presence of sincerity] in Allāh’s sight and is reliant on this principle. Speaking out against *bidʿah* and flagrant sinning is also part of *Dīn*, in fact, it is one of the greatest services to *Dīn*. It will also need sincerity, and will not be accepted without sincerity. And sincerity is always adulterated by the self-ego. Therefore, when a person speaks out against *bidʿah* or sin, and he becomes proud or boastful of his knowledge and piety, how can his objection be accepted by Allāh ﷻ in the presence of such impure illnesses [pride and ostentation]!?

The basis for objection to *bidʿah* and sin is anger for Allāh’s sake, as proven by the elders of the *ummah*. As for it being adulterated by anger for one’s self, this is learnt from the statements of the very same elders. And we also learnt that they abandoned anger for one’s self, just as they practised on anger for Allāh’s sake for the pleasure of Allāh ﷻ. These two categories are

established from the practices of these personalities. Had they not spoken about anger for one's self, it would have remained, and people would have assumed it to be anger for Allāh's sake, and the latter [anger for Allāh's sake] would have disappeared from this world.

Anger for Allāh's sake is *fard*, and anger for one's self is *harām*

Just as anger for Allāh's sake is *fard*, anger for one's self is *harām*. Imām Ghazzālī's *rahimahullāh* differentiation of the two is an evidence against all worshippers and *'ulamā'*. They must gauge if they are included in what the Imām spoke out against.

Because of the confusion and misunderstanding which is caused by the two, it is necessary to differentiate between them. The matter is very easy for the person who is able to differentiate, but what should the person who cannot differentiate do? Imām Ghazzālī *rahimahullāh* says with regard to such a person:

"In order to save yourself from such confusion, you must be mindful of three points when you see a *bid'atī* or sinner, or when you engage him in *amr bil ma'rūf* (enjoining good) and *nahy 'anil munkar* (prohibiting evil):

1. Focus on your own past sins so that your status is considered low in your own eyes, and your own self considers you to be despicable.

2. The superiority which you enjoy over the sinner or *bidʿatī* either in your knowledge, beliefs or good deeds must be considered to be a bestowal and grace from Allāh ﷻ. It is certainly not your achievement. If you bear this in mind, you will not experience any conceit. If you do not have any conceit, you will not have any pride.

3. Your end and the person's end are both unknown to you. You should at least have the fear that your end may not be good (Allāh ﷻ forbid) and the person's end may be good. If you bear this in mind, you will develop fear which will then keep you away from pride.

If you tell me: "The fear which these points will cause will certainly put an end to my pride, but will also put an end to my anger, then how will I achieve anger for Allāh's sake?" I will say to you: No. If your master orders you to become angry, you can become angry for his sake. It will certainly not be for your self because you will not consider yourself to be saved and the other person to be destroyed. Instead, you will be fearful about your own self because you would have realized that although this person appears to be a sinner, your hidden and internal sins are far more than his. Furthermore, you do not even know about your end and his end. How, then, can the other person be scorned? Conclusion: humility and anger can be combined.

We now explain this to you through an example to demonstrate that it is not necessary to vex

pride over and consider yourself to be greater than the person against whom you are angry for Allāh's sake. A king has a slave and also a son who is the delight of his eyes. He hands over his son to his slave and says to him: "I am placing him under your tutelage. If he misbehaves or does anything displeasing, you must scold him, you must warn him. And if there is a need, you must hit him." If this slave loves his master and is obedient to him, he will have no alternative but to scold and beat his son if he commits any misdemeanour. If he becomes angry at the son, he will do it solely for his master's sake, he will do it in compliance with his orders, and thereby gain the pleasure and proximity of his master. Moreover, he will do it because he can obtain the master's pleasure through the son. He will also do it because the son has done something which is displeasing to the master. So although he will become angry at him, he will not vex any pride in the least over him. Instead, he will remain humble even in this situation because he also bears in mind his own position and the son's rank, viz. no matter what, the son enjoys a higher and superior rank to the slave.

We learn from this that pride and absence of humility are not essential for anger. Thus, it is possible for you to reprimand a *bidʿatī* and sinner, while thinking in your heart that he could be better than you. A good end may well be destined for him, while a bad end has been destined for you; and you do not know about it. So now when you become angry at him, you will

do it solely for your master's sake, out of love for your master, and because the son has done something which is disliked by your master. At such a time, humility will be maintained because you understand that his position could be better than yours in the Hereafter. How can pride remain after this?

Those *ʿulamā'* who possess understanding and insight are able to combine humility and fear in this way. As for those who are deceived [and conceited], they will vex pride on one hand, and also desire additional reward on the other hand. Whereas they have no knowledge of their end. Can there be anything more deceiving than this?

This is the way of combining humility and anger for Allāh's sake when dealing with a sinner and *bidʿatī*, and the way to consider yourself to be worse when deciding to remain aloof from a sinner and *bidʿatī* – all of which is required by the Sharīʿah.

The explanation of Imām Ghazzālī *rahimahullāh* ends here. (*Ihyā' al-ʿUlūm*, vol. 3, p. 370)

Why is compassion meritorious?

I say: The method of freeing oneself [from pride and ostentation] as shown by the Imām is correct. However, only a certain section of the *ummah* can practise on it. It is not easy for people of every strata to adopt his method. And so, I am providing a simple method derived from the

Imām’s explanation itself. While explaining the merit of kindness, the Imām mentions towards the end of the chapter that Abū ʿAun Ans̲ārī ؓ narrates: When a person utters a harsh word, there is always a kind word which can be brought in its place.

The Imām continues: The *ʿulamā’* constantly speak in praise of kindness and compassion because they prove to be more beneficial in most cases and situations. On the other hand, harshness is needed on very rare and few occasions. The ideal person is the one who has developed the ability to differentiate between occasions which need kindness and those which need harshness, and is able to give each person his due. But if a person is short-sighted and the reality of a particular situation is hidden from him – that is, he does not know whether the situation demands kindness or harshness – then he must certainly opt for kindness because there is more success in it. (*Ih̲yā’ al-ʿUlūm*, vol. 3, p. 186)

The perfect and the defective person

The above ruling which the Imām issued with regard to a perfect and a defective person was related to kindness and harshness when enjoining good and prohibiting evil. We can apply the same ruling here and say: The person who is *kāmil* – that is, he possesses the ability to distinguish – may express his opposition to *bidʿah* and sin. This is because he has the ability to

distinguish whether it is anger for Allāh's sake or not. But if a person is *nāqis̲* – that is, he cannot distinguish – he should most certainly not speak out against it because it could well lead him to pride, and this is certainly not anger for Allāh's sake. It is most important to save one's self from pride; that is why permission is not given to him. If permission was given to him, it would lead to many harms, as is witnessed today.

We learn from the above that there are separate rulings for the *kāmil* and the *nāqis̲*. The person who has the ability to distinguish, may act accordingly. The one who does not have the ability, should exercise caution and not say anything. The acquisition of this ability is dependent on one's choice. By this I mean, if a person makes a sincere intention and worships Allāh ﷻ, Allāh ﷻ will create purity in his heart by virtue of his worship. This will result in good character. Evil qualities will be removed and he will be attracted to good things. He develops an affinity with *Dīn* and religiousness, and whenever he sees anything contrary to it or experiences a condition different from his internal condition, he will perceive it with his intuition. A person who has this intuition is known as one who is *muwaffaq* (inspired by Allāh ﷻ). This is similar to our external taste buds. We drink water and perceive it to be such. If sugar is added to it, we perceive it to be a sweet drink which is different from water. Or, for example, if a food has salt and another food does not have salt, we are able to tell the difference.

Similarly, deeds have an internal spiritual taste when they are carried out with sincerity. When they are devoid of sincerity, they have a different taste. The person who is *muwaffaq* is able to recognize the difference. It is possible for a person to have sincerity in the beginning and to lose it later on. It is also possible for him to have no sincerity in the beginning but to develop it later on.

Glory to Allāh! What excellent speech which can only be delivered by an erudite *'ālim* like Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh*. May Allāh ﷻ also bless us – his associates – with such knowledge and intuition. (Qamar az-Zamān)

Stories of the pious

We now relate a few stories of the pious to you, from which you will gauge the extent of their sincerity. When anything insincere adulterated their deeds, they would perceive it immediately, and would be able to differentiate between sincerity and self-ego.

The story of Hadrat 'Umar Fārūq ؓ

The first story in this regard is of Hadrat 'Umar Fārūq ؓ on the occasion of conquering Bayt al-Maqdis. When the Muslims laid siege to Bayt al-Maqdis during his caliphate, the residents of the city said: "Call your caliph. His description is given in our books. If he is as described in our books, we will open the gates of our forts without

going to war with you, and we will surrender the city to you.” The Muslim army sent a message to Hadrat ʿUmar ﵁, and he departed for Bayt al-Maqdis. At the time of his departure, he was wearing ordinary patched clothes and riding a camel. On seeing this, the Muslims who were with him said: “You are the leader of the Muslims. You should wear attractive and clean clothes, and you should be riding a horse.” Hadrat ʿUmar ﵁ acceded to their request, changed his clothes and mounted a horse.

He had just moved a few feet when he said: “My *nafs* (self) is feeling elated at these things. Bring back my old clothes and camel. I will proceed with them.” He also added:

نحن قوم أعزنا الله بالإسلام

“We are a nation whom Allāh ﷾ honoured through Islam [it is sufficient for us].”

Saying this, he wore the same old patched garments and proceeded on his camel. *Allāhu akbar!* Allāh is the greatest!

Look! Hadrat ʿUmar ﵁ changed his clothes and conveyance when people asked him. But when a change crept in his self because of them, he perceived it immediately, and identified the difference between sincerity and self-ego. Consequently, he changed his clothes and conveyance to the original. The blessings of his sincerity are well known – the fort was conquered.

The story of Hadrat ʿAlī ؓ

In his *Mathnawi*, Maulānā Rūm *rahimahullāh* relates a story of Hadrat ʿAlī ؓ. While waging jihād on one occasion, he overpowered a non-Muslim, climbed on his chest, and was about to finish him off with his sword. This disrespectful non-Muslim spat on his blessed face. Hadrat ʿAlī ؓ immediately cast his sword aside and got off his chest. The non-Muslim was astonished and asked him the reason for letting him go. He replied:

"When you spat on my face, my *nafs* became inflamed and my noble character was becoming tainted. My fighting was now a little for Allāh's ﷻ sake and a little for my self-ego. And it is not permissible to include anyone [or anything] in Allāh's ﷻ worship. You are a creation of Allāh ﷻ and you belong to Him; you do not belong to me. Thus, I can only do what is permitted by Allāh ﷻ. You are created by Allāh ﷻ, and anything created by Him can only be destroyed by His order. A glass belonging to a friend can only be broken by a rock belonging to the friend."

It was solely the blessing of Hadrat ʿAlī's ؓ sincerity which enabled him to control his *nafs*. The blessing of his sincerity caused the non-Muslim to embrace Islam, who was then instrumental in many of his family members embracing Islam.

This was the story of a senior Sahābī; in fact of an Amīr al-Mu'minīn (leaders of the believers). The books record many stories of many kings and rulers who possessed such distinguished character with which they could differentiate between their sincerity and self-ego.

The book, *Akhlāq Muhsinī*, relates the story of one of the caliphs of Khurāsān who issued an order of punishment against a certain criminal. The moment the people began lashing the criminal, he began swearing and hurling verbal abuses at the caliph. He issued an order to stop all punishment and freed him. One of the close associates of the caliph said: "Hadrat! Now was the time to mete out more punishment against this shameless criminal. What was the reason for pardoning and freeing him?"

The caliph replied: "I was disciplining him for Allāh's ﷻ sake. When he began swearing me and hurling abuses at me, my *nafs* changed and it was affected by what he said. I wanted to exact revenge from him but I did not want to include my *nafs* in the matter of Allāh ﷻ. This is very far from sincerity. When a person does a *Dīnī* act and includes a worldly motive to it, he is deprived of its reward."

"His swearing and verbal abuses enraged me. Consequently, the deed which was for Allāh ﷻ became tainted with my personal motives. Once the demand of the *nafs* becomes obvious, how

can the deed remain sincere? It is better to give up the act in which there is no sincerity.”

The story of a *buzurg*

The *Ih̲yā’ al-ʿUlūm* relates the story of a *buzurg* who would never engage in futile conversations. He was walking along a river bank one day when he saw a boat approaching. The boat had large vats, so he asked the boat people: “What is in the vats?” They replied swiftly: “The king’s wine. You can do whatever you like.” He said: “What is in your hands?” They replied: “Fighting sticks.” He said: “Give them to me for a short while.” They gave it to him, and he began using them to break the vats one after the other. He eventually broke twenty nine of the thirty vats, and left one. The king was informed of this and he summoned the *buzurg*.

It is said that he was a tyrant who used to sit on a steel throne with a steel axe in his hand. He asked the *buzurg*: “Did you break the vats?” He replied: “Yes.” The king asked: “Who appointed you as a *muh̲tasib* (inspector)?” The *buzurg* replied: “The One who made you king.” On hearing this, the king lowered his head for a while, and asked him after some time: “Okay, tell me what prompted you to do what you did?” The *buzurg* replied: “Nothing except desiring the well-being of the Amīr al-Mu’minīn. If I see a snake or scorpion heading towards the Amīr al-Mu’minīn, it is my compulsory duty to save him. Like wise, when I saw an item [wine] heading towards the

Amīr al-Mu'minīn which would cause him to be taken to task severely in the Hereafter, my desire for his well-being compelled me to save him from it."

On hearing this, the king lowered his head and remained in thought for a long while. He then said: "Okay, tell me one thing. When you were intent on breaking them, why did you not break all of them? Why did you leave one?" The *buzurg* replied: "Now that you asked me, I will have to tell you. As long as I was breaking the vats, my heart was in an excellent condition. I was filled with the emotions of dislike for Allāh's sake (*bughd̲ fillāh*) and desiring good for a fellow Muslim. I was so overpowered by these emotions that if the entire world was filled with wine vats, I would have broken them all. But when I reached the thirtieth vat, my *nafs* (self-ego) got the better of me and I thought to myself: 'You are so brave with regard to *nahy 'anil munkar* (prohibiting evil) that you did not even bother about the king of the time.' No sooner this thought entered my heart, I realized that my *nafsānīyyat* (self-ego) has come in and *lillāhīyyat* (doing something solely for Allāh's pleasure) has departed. And so, I did not break the last vat."

The king was very much affected by the *buzurg's* speech and said: "Very well, I am appointing you as an inspector from today." The *buzurg* replied: "Excuse me, but I cannot accept this position because if you can appoint me to it today, you can remove me from it tomorrow. I do not need

it.” Saying this, he departed from there and never came to the city for as long as the king was alive.

Did you see! By virtue of their sincerity, the pious elders and close friends of Allāh ﷾ develop a special condition in their hearts through which they can differentiate between *nafsānīyyat* and *lillāhīyyat*. I say: Since it is necessary to acquire sincerity, and compulsory to safeguard one’s self from *nafsānīyyat*, it becomes necessary on every Muslim to understand the difference and develop this capability in his heart. This has always been the *modus operandi* of the *buzurgs*, i.e. they speak about sincerity and try to develop this quality in their associates. You too will not deny the need for it because you saw how the fearless worshipper [mentioned at the beginning] had no dearth of good deeds. But what he really lacked was sincerity.

Listen further! Maulwī ‘Abd al-Karīm Sāhib Gumthalwī related a story of Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ‘Alī Thānwī *rahimahullāh*. He was about to journey to Delhi, so he said, carry some clothes and we will change them when we reach there. The clothes which I am wearing will suffice for the journey. The Maulwī Sāhib relates: Hadrat did not change his clothes even after reaching Delhi. He delivered his clothes in the same dirty clothes. Hadrat may have had some thoughts of ostentation and pride, and that is why he did not change them.

Now listen to another incident. Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī *rahimahullāh* invited Hadrat Maulānā Shaykh al-Hind Mahmūd al-Hasan Deobandī *rahimahullāh* to Kānpūr on one occasion. When he arrived, Hadrat [Shaykh al-Hind *rahimahullāh*] was requested to deliver a talk. Hadrat accepted and delivered an excellent speech. Many of those who were experts in the rational sciences were left astounded by the level of his speech. While delivering his speech, Maulwī Lutfullāh Sāhib ʿAlīgarhī arrived. Hadrat concluded his speech immediately. The people were saddened by this because they felt it was an ideal opportunity for Hadrat to continue speaking in the presence of this Maulwī Sāhib [who was an accepted authority in the rational sciences]. Hadrat's speech was in itself on a very high intellectual level, and had he continued, the Maulwī Sāhib would have heard something in this regard. Someone plucked the courage and conveyed this to Hadrat Deobandī *rahimahullāh*. He said in no uncertain terms: "Brother! The thought occurred to me as well, but I ended my speech because it would no longer be for Allāh's سبحانه وتعالى pleasure."

You may have gauged from these stories to what extent these pious elders focused their attention on their *nafs*. Instead of saying things to others, they were concerned about taking stock of their own selves.

I now conclude by summarising whatever was said:

(1) Man ought to look at his own faults. It is most detestable to look down on others and to look at them with derision. As long as a person does not look at his own faults, he will look at the faults of others. No sooner he examines his own faults, the derision which he feels for others will depart from his heart.

A poet says:

“I was criticizing others, but no sooner I opened my eyes, I found my heart to be densely filled with faults and defects.”

Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Ahmad Sāhib *rahimahullāh* conveys the same theme as follows:

“The moment I opened my eyes, my own position and rank fell down before me.” (Muhammad Qamar az-Zamān)

(2) The sinner who is ashamed of his sins, is fearful of Allāh’s ﷻ punishment, and hopeful of His forgiveness is better than the fearless worshipper who relies on his worship.

“The sinful servant who is fearful of Allāh’s ﷻ punishment is better than the worshipper who is ostentatious in his worship.”

This is the meaning of the *buzurgs* statements:

العاصي خير من المدعي

"A sinner is better than a person who claims piety."

A poet says:

"The ascetic could not traverse the path safely because of his pride and arrogance. The person who had lost the way entered Dār as-Salām (Paradise) by virtue of his servitude and submission."

(3) The essential way is the way of humility (*tawāḏuʿ*). This was the Sunnah of every Prophet ﷺ and the practice of the righteous of every era. We explained this point in the commentary to Rasūlullāh's ﷺ *duʿā'*:

أَنَا الْبَائِسُ الْفَقِيْرُ...

(4) There is no contradiction between humility and *bughḏ fillāh* (hatred for Allāh's sake); both can be found collectively. A person must bear in mind his own position in order to maintain humility. A poet addresses himself: "O Ayāz! Recognize your own position." When expressing your *bughḏ* (hatred), be mindful of the well-being of the other person. In other words, understand well that this way will be most beneficial for him. Thus, humility must be in accordance to one's own position, and *bughḏ* in accordance to the

other's position. If this can be maintained, there will be no contradiction between the two.

(5) Most certainly, *bughd̲ lin nafs* (hatred for one's self) and *bughd̲ fillāh* are sometimes confused. A person may be giving vent to his own anger but his *nafs* deceives him into thinking he is doing it for Allāh's sake. In order to prevent such a mistake, a person must develop the ability to distinguish between the two. The *buzurgs* developed this quality and were able to distinguish between *nafsānīyyat* and sincerity. Every person is duty-bound to develop this quality. Obviously, such a distinction can only be developed by remaining in the company of those who possess it. As long as a person does not develop this quality, he should not express *bughd̲ fillāh* verbally because his *nafs* could well join in without his realizing it. And so, abstaining from it is not as harmful as the experiencing of *nafsānīyyat*, pride, haughtiness and looking at others with scorn and derision. Therefore, it is more appropriate and cautious to refrain from it. This is similar to when a person is unable to identify the occasions of severity and leniency when enjoining good and prohibiting evil. In such a case, he has to opt for leniency.

I conclude with the following *du'ā'*:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنَّكَ تَسْمَعُ كَلاَمِيْ، وَتَرٰى مَكَانِيْ، وَتَعْلَمُ سِرِّيْ وَعَلاَنِيَتِيْ، لاَ يَخْفٰى عَلَيْكَ شَيْءٌ مِّنْ اَمْرِيْ، وَاَنَا الْبَآئِسُ الْفَقِيْرُ، الْمُسْتَغِيْثُ الْمُسْتَجِيْرُ، الْوَجِلُ الْمُشْفِقُ، الْمُقِرُّ

الْمُعْتَرِفُ بِذَنْبِيْ. اَسْاَلُكَ مَسْاَلَةَ الْمِسْكِيْنِ، وَاَبْتَهِلُ اِلَيْكَ ابْتِهَالَ الْمُذْنِبِ الذَّلِيْلِ. وَاَدْعُوْكَ دُعَآءَ الْخَآئِفِ الضَّرِيْرِ، وَدُعَآءَ مَنْ خَضَعَتْ لَكَ رَقَبَتُهُ، وَفَاضَتْ لَكَ عَبْرَتُهُ، وَذَلَّ لَكَ جِسْمُهُ، وَرَغِمَ لَكَ اَنْفُهُ. (فيض القدير، ج٢، ص١١٧)

"O Allāh! You hear my speech, You can see where I am, You know whatever I conceal and whatever I disclose, nothing of mine can remain concealed from You. I am the one who is afflicted, the one who is in need, the one who is crying out for help, the one who is seeking refuge, the one who is in fear, the one who is in awe [of You], the one who admits and confesses his sins. I beg of You the begging of a destitute, I beseech You the beseeching of a wretched sinner, I ask You the asking of a fearful person who has been afflicted by a calamity, and the asking of the person whose neck is submitted before You, whose tears are flowing for You, whose body is humbled before You, and who has submitted himself before You."

ربنا تقبل منا إنك أنت السميع العليم

بحرمة سيدنا النبي الكريم صلى الله عليه وسلم.

O Allāh! Accept from us, surely You are all-hearing, all-knowing. We ask of You by the sanctity of our Master, the Noble Prophet ﷺ.

Apology and request for *du'ā'*

This insignificant servant, Muhammad Qamar az-Zamān Ilāhābādī, completed the simplification and commentary of this phenomenal book on this day, 10 Muharram al-Harām 1429 A.H., in Bayt al-Adhkār, Wasīyyābād. May Allāh ﷻ accept it and enable the masses, the learned, and the seekers to benefit from it. May He make it an effulgent light which makes clear the path of the Tarīqah and *sulūk*. Āmīn.

This insignificant servant acknowledges the errors and shortcomings which he committed in this book. He did not fulfil the duty of going back to the original Arabic and Persian texts, nor of providing references to the Ahādīth. May Allāh ﷻ forgive him for this, and enable him to put in full effort for all future writings and books of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh*, and to produce them in a more scholarly manner. Āmīn.

O Allāh! This date [10th of Muharram] has many historical connotations. Pharaoh was drowned on this day and Hadrat Mūsā عليه السلام was given salvation from him. O Allāh! During the last moments of this day, I make an earnest *du'ā'* to You! Drown and destroy all the Pharaohs of today who wish to wipe out Islam and the Muslims. Provide total protection to all the *'ulamā'*, *mashā'ikh*, all Muslim males and females, and all *masājid*, *madāris* and Islamic institutions and organizations. Shower us with Your grace and kindness.

ربنا تقبل منا إنك أنت السميع العليم

O Allāh! Accept this from us, surely You are all-hearing, all-knowing.

Bayt al-Adhkār, Wasīyyābād, Ilāhābād
Just before *maghrib*, 10 Muharram al-Harām 1429 A.H.

INTRODUCTION

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

نحمده ونصلي على رسوله الكريم

أما بعد! عن أنس قال، قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم كل بني آدم خطاء وخير الخطائين التوابون. (ابن ماجه، كتاب الزهد، ص٣١٣)

Rasūlullāh ﷺ states in the above Hadīth: "O progeny of Ādam (especially those of you who are from my *ummah*)! Every one of you is a sinner, and the best of sinners are those who repent to Allāh ﷻ in abundance."

O Muslims! We have to constantly examine our internal and external selves, identify our mistakes and sins, and confess and acknowledge them before Allāh ﷻ.

Sins are of two types: (1) Shortcomings and mistakes in fulfilling the rights of Allāh ﷻ. (2) Shortcomings and mistakes in fulfilling the rights of fellow humans. It is necessary to repent and seek forgiveness from both. I am quoting the procedure for repentance and forgiveness from my own book, *Guldistah-e-Adhkār*.

Repentance and seeking forgiveness

The obligation of repentance from every sin is established from the Qur'ān and Hadīth. If the sin is between the servant and Allāh ﷻ, there are three conditions for the validity of repentance: (1)

The person must give up the sin completely. (2) He must be remorseful with all his heart for the sin which he committed. (3) He must make a firm resolution of not committing the sin again. If any of these conditions are not fulfilled, repentance will not be valid.

If the sin is related to any person, there are four conditions for the validity of repentance. The above three conditions, and one additional one, viz. if he owes the person anything of monetary value, he must pay him back or seek his pardon in this regard. If he was abusive to someone, disrespectful to him, or harsh towards him, he must ask him to pardon him. This is especially so with one's elders, e.g. parents, teachers, and spiritual mentors. One should seek their pardon with absolute humility. If a person slandered someone, he must empower him to exact the prescribed revenge or seek his pardon. If he engaged in backbiting or complaining about a person, he must seek his pardon. If there is the possibility of further problems if he were to express what he did, he should seek his pardon in a general and ambiguous manner, and continue making *duʿā'* for him. In fact, he should also give charity on his behalf so that Allāh ﷾ may obtain pardon for him on the day of Resurrection from the person against whom he committed the sin. This is most certainly easy for Allāh ﷾.

Allāh ﷾ orders repentance and seeking forgiveness (*taubah wa istighfār*) in several places

in the Qur’ān. One of them is the verse in which He explicitly orders *taubah-e-na<u>s</u>ū<u>h</u>* :

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ آمَنُوْا تُوْبُوْا إِلَى اللهِ تَوْبَةً نَّصُوْحًا (سورة تحريم، ٨)

“O believers! Turn to Allāh in repentance with a sincere repentance.”

A comprehensive definition of *taubah-e-na<u>s</u>ū<u>h</u>*

In his *Madārij as-Sālikīn*, <u>H</u>a<u>d</u>rat ‘Allāmah Ibn al-Qayyim *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* quotes the following statement of Mu<u>h</u>ammad ibn Ka‘b Qura<u>z</u>ī *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* with regard to *taubah-e-na<u>s</u>ū<u>h</u>*:

يجمعها أربعة أشياء، الإستغفار باللسان، والإقلاع بالأبدان، وإضمار ترك العود بالجنان، ومهاجرة سيء الإخوان. (مدارج السالكين، ج١، ص٣١٠)

Taubah-e-na<u>s</u>ū<u>h</u> is realized with four things: (1) to seek forgiveness verbally, (2) to remain aloof from the sin physically, (3) to make a firm resolution with the heart of not committing the sin again, (4) to remain aloof from evil companions.

Glory to Allāh! The fourth condition of repentance as listed by ‘Allāmah Ibn al-Qayyim *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* is generally not found in books. Such a condition is necessary because a person gets involved in evils through evil company. The ‘Allāmah *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* included this condition because although the person may have given up the evil, remaining in the company of fellow residents may

well urge him towards the sin again, and he may become more involved than previously in it. This is why we have to be particularly cautious of evil company.

The first type of sins, viz. shortcomings in fulfilling the rights of Allāh ﷻ, was explained in detail by Hadrat Muslihul Ummat Maulānā Wasīyyullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* in *I'tirāf-e-Dhunūb*. If a person studies it with concentration, *inshā Allāh*, Hadrat Muslihul Ummat's *rahimahullāh* effective explanation will certainly prompt him to repent over his sins and seek forgiveness. Allāh ﷻ will also shower the person with His acceptance.

As for the second type of sins, viz. shortcomings in fulfilling the rights of one's fellow humans, I am writing this book to draw the reader's attention to the importance of this subject and to encourage him towards repentance from it. Once knowledge in this regard is obtained, its importance will be gauged, and the person will be ready to make up for it through repentance and seeking forgiveness.

Apart from relating incidents from the lives of Rasūlullāh ﷺ, Hadrat Abū Bakr ؓ and Hadrat 'Umar Fārūq ؓ, we will relate incidents from the lives of senior pious personalities of the *ummah* such as Hadrat Fudayl ibn 'Iyād *rahimahullāh*, Hadrat Sayyid Ahmad Shahīd *rahimahullāh*, Hadrat 'Allāmah Rahmatullāh Sāhib Kīrānwī *rahimahullāh*, Hadrat Hakīm al-Ummah Maulānā

Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh*, Hadrat Muslihul Ummat Maulānā Wasīyyullāh Sāhib Ilāhābādī *rahimahullāh*, Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Ahmad Sāhib Partābgarhī *rahimahullāh* and others. We are naming this important subject, *Iʿtirāf-e-Qusūr* (acknowledgement of one's mistakes). Just as Allāh ﷾ - through His grace and kindness – enabled Hadrat Muslihul Ummat's *rahimahullāh* book, *Iʿtirāf-e-Dhunūb*, to be a source of great benefit, may He make this addendum, *Iʿtirāf-e-Qusūr*, a source of great benefit as well. And may He accept it in His court. Āmīn.

There was a special reason for naming this book *Iʿtirāf-e-Qusūr*, viz. Hadrat Murshidī Maulānā Muhammad Ahmad Sāhib *rahimahullāh* mentioned these words in his poem which caused my mind to be transported to this theme, and so the book itself was given this name. The lines of his poem read thus:

"At times I experience the joy of having obeyed Allāh ﷾. At times I have to acknowledge my sins. I am constantly mindful of the thing which the angel is not aware of. This is the beginning and end of those who truly love Allāh ﷾. O Ahmad [referring to himself] who possesses nothing. I acknowledge my sins."

I make *duʿā'* to Allāh ﷾ to enable all of us to acknowledge our sins, repent from them and seek forgiveness for them; and to enable us to obtain pardon from those whose rights we trampled. May

Allāh ﷾ - the most Merciful of those who show mercy – pardon us our sins. Āmīn.

Muhammad Qamar az-Zamān Ilāhābādī, *may Allāh ﷾ pardon him*
Madrasah ʿArabīyyah Bayt al-Maʿārif, Ilāhābād
Muharram al-Harām 1429 A.H./January 2008.

الحمد لله وكفى وسلام على عباده الذين اصطفى

A great Sunnah of Rasūlullāh ﷺ was to seek forgiveness from Allāh ﷻ and acknowledge his sins before Him. In like manner, if he displayed any shortcoming in fulfilling the rights of his fellow humans or harmed them physically or verbally, he considered it to be a cause of Allāh's ﷻ displeasure, and obtained pardon from the person. This is also a great Sunnah of Rasūlullāh ﷺ.

In his famous book, *Uswa-e-Rasūl-e-Akram* ﷺ, Hadrat Doctor ʿAbd al-Hayy Sāhib *rahimahullāh*, a *khalīfah* of Hadrat Hakīm al-Ummah *rahimahullāh* relates the following Hadīth of Rasūlullāh ﷺ under the chapter titled "The position of servitude". In this Hadīth, Rasūlullāh ﷺ instructs the Sahābah رضي الله عنهم in general to pardon and overlook, and thereby left an important Sunnah for the *ummah*. May Allāh ﷻ enable all of us to practise on this important Sunnah. Āmīn. I now quote the Hadīth:

Rasūlullāh's ﷺ apology on the pulpit

Hadrat Fadl رضي الله عنه narrates: I went to visit Rasūlullāh ﷺ and noticed that he had a high fever, and a bandage was tied around his head. He said to me:

'Hold my hand.' I held his hand, he proceeded to the musjid, sat on the pulpit, and said: 'Summon the people to assemble here.' I summoned the people. Rasūlullāh ﷺ first praised Allāh ﷻ and said: 'The time is approaching for me to leave you and depart. If I struck anyone on his back, my back is here before him; he may take revenge. If anyone has any monetary claim against me, he may demand it now. No person should ever feel that I will dislike him for taking revenge from me. Such dislike is neither in my nature nor is it becoming of me. Understand well! The person who claims his right from me is extremely beloved to me. Or he may pardon me so that I may proceed to Allāh ﷻ with a happy heart. I do not wish to confine myself to just this one announcement. I will announce it again.' Rasūlullāh ﷺ got off the pulpit, and after performing the *z̲uhr s̲alāh*, he climbed it again, and made the same announcement. He also repeated his statement about not having any dislike for such a person. He added: 'If anyone has any due, he must fulfil it. He must not worry about worldly disgrace because it is nothing compared to the disgrace of the Hereafter.'

A person stood up and said: 'You owe me three dirhams.' Rasūlullāh ﷺ said: 'I do not wish to belie any claimant nor do I ask him to take an oath. But tell me, how did I come to owe you these three dirhams?' The person said: 'A beggar had come to you one day and you asked me to give him three dirhams.' Rasūlullāh ﷺ said to H̲ad̲rat Fad̲l ؓ: 'Give him three dirhams.' Another

person stood up and said: 'I owe three dirhams to the Bayt al-Māl (Islamic Treasury). I had taken them treacherously.' Rasūlullāh ﷺ asked: 'Why did you act treacherously?' He replied: 'I was in real need at the time.' Rasūlullāh ﷺ said to Hadrat Fadl رضي الله عنه: 'Collect three dirhams from him.'

Rasūlullāh ﷺ then announced: 'Anyone having any doubt about any condition should ask me to make *du'ā'* with regard to it [because the time of departure has drawn near].' A person stood up and said: 'O Rasūlullāh! I am a liar. I am a hypocrite. I have the illness of sleeping too much.' Rasūlullāh ﷺ made *du'ā'*: 'O Allāh! Bless him with honesty, bestow him with full *īmān*, and cure him from the illness of over-sleeping.' Another person stood up and said: 'O Rasūlullāh! I am a liar. I am a hypocrite. There is no sin which I did not commit.' Hadrat 'Umar رضي الله عنه warned him against publicizing his sins. Rasūlullāh ﷺ said: 'O 'Umar! Remain silent. The humiliation of this world is light compared to the humiliation of the Hereafter.'

Rasūlullāh ﷺ then said: 'O Allāh! Bless him with honesty and complete *īmān*. And set right all his affairs.' Another person stood up and said: 'O Rasūlullāh! I am a coward, and have the illness of sleeping too much.' Rasūlullāh ﷺ made *du'ā'* for him as well. Hadrat Fadl رضي الله عنه relates: '[After Rasūlullāh ﷺ made this *du'ā'* for him] we never saw anyone more brave than him.'

Rasūlullāh ﷺ then proceeded to Hadrat ʻĀ'ishah's *radiyallāhu ʻanhā* house, addressed the assembly of women, and made the same announcements which he made in the assembly of men. A Sahābiyah *radiyallāhu ʻanhā* said: 'O Rasūlullāh! I am unable to express myself properly.' Rasūlullāh ﷺ made *duʻā'* for her.

Rasūlullāh ﷺ announced: 'Anyone having any doubt about any condition should ask me to make *duʻā'* with regard to it [because the time of departure has drawn near].' The people requested him to make different *duʻā's* in their favour.

May Allāh ﷻ shower abundant peace and salutations to Rasūlullāh ﷺ. (*Uswah-e-Rasūl-e-Akram*)

Just ponder! This is the perfect example of the Leader of all the Maʻsūmīn (those who are divinely protected from sin) and the Noblest of all the Messengers. This sinful *ummah* is in real need of emulating him. Allāh ﷻ alone inspires towards good.

Hadrat Hārūn عليه السلام offers an apology with utmost respect

When Hadrat Mūsā عليه السلام was about to depart for Mt. Tūr, he appointed Hadrat Hārūn عليه السلام as his deputy, ordered him to rectify the Banī Isrā'īl, and prohibited him from following those who cause corruption. Allāh ﷻ says:

وَقَالَ مُوْسٰى لأخِيْهِ هٰرُونَ اخْلُفْنِيْ فِيْ قَوْمِيْ وَأَصْلِحْ وَلاَ تَتَّبِعْ سَبِيلَ الْمُفْسِدِيْنَ

"Mūsā said to his brother, Hārūn: 'You be my deputy among my people, remain engaged in rectifying [them], and do not follow the path of the spreaders of corruption.'" (Sūrah al-Aʿrāf, 7: 142)

But when Hadrat Mūsā ﷷ returned to his people, he found them worshipping a calf. He became angry, cast aside the Tablets [which he had received from Allāh ﷾], held his brother, Hadrat Hārūn ﷷ, by his head and dragged him forward. Hadrat Hārūn ﷷ said: "O my brother! The people considered me to be weak and faint-hearted, and they were on the verge of killing me. Now do not give my enemies an opportunity to laugh at me, and do not include me among the wrongdoers (because I did not join them in their unbelief and polytheism). I should therefore not be treated as these wrongdoers are."

Hadrat Mūsā ﷷ realizes his mistake

When Hadrat Hārūn ﷷ explained the facts to him, Hadrat Mūsā ﷷ realized his mistake (although it was a judgemental error). He therefore beseeched Allāh ﷾ saying: "O Allāh! Forgive me and my brother, and engulf us in Your mercy, surely You are the most Merciful of those who show mercy." The Qur'ān states:

قَالَ رَبِّ اغْفِرْ لِيْ وَلأَخِيْ وَأَدْخِلْنَا فِيْ رَحْمَتِكَ صلى وَأَنْتَ أَرْحَمُ الرَّاحِمِيْنَ

"He said: 'O my Sustainer! Forgive me and my brother and admit us into Your mercy; You are the most merciful.'" (Sūrah al-Aʿrāf, 7: 151)

The fact of the matter is that when Hadrat Mūsā عليه السلام saw them worshipping the calf, he was overtaken by *Dīnī* emotion, and caught hold of his brother's head and beard as a way of reprimanding him. But once he heard about his brother's helplessness, he realized his own mistake and made *duʿā'* to Allāh سبحانه وتعالى for himself and his brother. This actually took the place of asking his brother for pardon.

We learn from this incident that if a senior wrongs his junior in any way, he must be concerned about making up for it. It is best to first of all seek a clear pardon from the person who was wronged. If this is not done, a *duʿā'* for pardon and forgiveness for him must be made because there can be no greater bounty than this in his favour.

At times, if a senior wrongs a junior, the latter forgives him in his heart even before the senior can ask him for forgiveness. Very often, respectful and beloved friends, and loyal *murīds* and students consider the scolding and reprimanding which they get from their elders to be an act of intrinsic love, and accept it as such. In fact, they consider it to be their good fortune. Nevertheless,

seniors too should not be unduly stern and harsh. Every person ought to bear in mind the injunctions of the Sharīʿah, and when he realizes his mistake, he must endeavour to rectify it even if it is against juniors. This could be done by making *duʿā’* for the person as was done by Hadrat Mūsā عليه السلام in favour of his brother, Hadrat Hārūn عليه السلام. May Allāh سبحانه وتعالى enable all of us to practise on the correct *Dīn*. *Āmīn*.

We learn another point from these verses. If a person sees someone committing a wrong, and he says harsh words to them after being overcome by *Dīnī* emotion, then not only is it permissible but essential. This is because just as softness and leniency are needed for rectification, it is essential to resort to severity and harshness at times for the removal of evil. Hadrat Mūsā عليه السلام resorted to severity against the people for their worshipping of the calf. Consequently, the people repented and the evil disappeared.

Yes, it is necessary for the reformer to have the ability to recognize the occasions of leniency and severity. If he is confused in this regard and does not know whether he should adopt a lenient or strict approach, then he must certainly adopt a lenient approach. This is because a lenient approach will not harm him as opposed to adopting severity in a situation which demanded leniency. There is a real danger of harm in such a case. (*Ihyā’ al-ʿUlūm*, Imām Ghazzālī *rahimahullāh*)

Hadrat Abū Bakr ؓ asks Hadrat ‘Umar ؓ to pardon him

Once there was an argument between Hadrat Abū Bakr ؓ and Hadrat ‘Umar ؓ. In the course of the exchange, Hadrat Abū Bakr ؓ uttered a few harsh words. But he himself regretted uttering them, and pleaded to Hadrat ‘Umar ؓ to pardon him. When Hadrat ‘Umar ؓ refused, there was no limit to the stress and discomfort which Hadrat Abū Bakr ؓ experienced. He got up immediately, proceeded to Rasūlullāh ﷺ and explained the reason for his stress. Rasūlullāh ﷺ consoled him by conveying these glad tidings three times to him: “O Abū Bakr! Allāh ﷾ will pardon you. O Abū Bakr! Allāh ﷾ will pardon you. O Abū Bakr! Allāh ﷾ will pardon you.”

In the meantime, Hadrat ‘Umar ؓ regretted his refusal, went to Hadrat Abū Bakr’s ؓ house in search of him, and when he did not find him, he proceeded to Rasūlullāh ﷺ. Rasūlullāh’s ﷺ expression changed [to one of anger] when he saw him. When Hadrat Abū Bakr ؓ saw this, he sat upright and pleaded to Rasūlullāh ﷺ saying: “O Rasūlullāh! I was the one who wronged him.” Although Rasūlullāh’s ﷺ anger subsided, he said: “When I was commissioned as a Prophet, everyone except Abū Bakr belied me. He assisted

me with his life and wealth. Will you now leave my companion for my sake?”[1]

Hadrat Abū Bakr ﷺ asks Hadrat Salmān ﷺ and others to pardon him

Hadrat Abū Hubayrah ʿĀ’idh ibn ʿAmr al-Muzanī ﷺ (who was from among those who were present for the Bayʿatur Ridwān) narrates: Hadrat Abū Sufyān ﷺ [who was not a Muslim at the time] went to Hadrat Salmān ﷺ, Hadrat Suhayb ﷺ and Hadrat Bilāl ﷺ. They said to him: “Without doubt, the swords of Allāh ﷻ have not taken their dues against His enemies.” When Hadrat Abū Bakr ﷺ heard this, he said: “Are you saying such things to one of the elders and leaders of the Quraysh!?”

Hadrat Abū Bakr ﷺ then proceeded to Rasūlullāh ﷺ and related the incident to him. Rasūlullāh ﷺ said: “You must have certainly displeased them. And if you displeased them, you have displeased Allāh ﷻ.” Hadrat Abū Bakr ﷺ went back to them and said: “O brothers! I displeased you.” They said: “No brother. May Allāh ﷻ forgive you.”[2]

Hadrat ʿUmar ﷺ asks an old man to pardon him

Hadrat ʿUmar ﷺ was patrolling at night with Hadrat Ibn Masʿūd ﷺ. He peeped through a hole

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[1]بخاري شريف، كتاب المناقب، باب قول النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم لو كنت متخذا خليلا.

[2]رواه مسلم، رياض الصالحين، ١١٠.

in a door and saw an old man who had wine and a few dancing women in front of him. The two climbed the wall, went to the old man and said: "What an evil thing for an old man like you to do!?"

The old man stood up and said: "O Amīr al-Mu'minīn! I take an oath that you must not pass any judgement on me until you have heard what I have to say." Hadrat ʿUmar ﷺ said: "You may speak." The old man said: "If I disobeyed Allāh ﷻ in one matter, you disobeyed Allāh ﷻ by committing three offences." Hadrat ʿUmar ﷺ asked: "What are they?" He said: "The first offence you committed was that you spied on me, and Allāh ﷻ prohibits this. Allāh ﷻ says:

وَلاَ تَجَسَّسُوْا

"Do not spy on each other."

The second offence is that you jumped over the back wall of my house and entered, whereas Allāh ﷻ says:

وَأْتُوا الْبُيُوْتَ مِنْ أَبْوَابِهَا

"Enter the houses from their doors. [That is, do not enter from the rear]."

Allāh ﷻ also says:

لَيْسَ الْبِرَّ بِأَنْ تَأْتُوا الْبُيُوْتَ مِنْ ظُهُوْرِهَا

“It is not an act of piety to enter houses from their rear.”

The third offence is that you entered my house without permission, whereas Allāh ﷾ says:

لاَ تَدْخُلُوْا بُيُوْتًا غَيْرَ بُيُوْتِكُمْ حَتَّى تَسْتَأْنِسُوْا وَتُسَلِّمُوْا عَلَى أَهْلِهَا

“O believers! Do not enter houses other than your own houses until you have asked permission and wished peace to their owners.” (Sūrah an-Nūr, 24: 27)

Hadrat ‘Umar ؓ said: “You are right. Will you forgive me?” The old man said: “May Allāh ﷾ forgive you.” Hadrat ‘Umar ؓ left crying, and he was saying to himself: “O ‘Umar! You are destroyed if Allāh ﷾ does not forgive you.”

Hadrat ‘Umar ؓ also addressed himself saying: “You know well that a person tries to conceal such a condition [of consuming wine and being in the company of dancing women] from his own family and children. He will now think to himself that the Amīr al-Mu’minīn has seen him.”

Hadrat Muslihul Ummat Maulānā Wasīyyullāh Sāhib's *rahimahullāh* commentary to the above story

The above story shows that a *muhtasib* (inspector) should neither spy, enter houses by jumping over walls, nor enter without permission.

Glory to Allāh! What a beautiful story! People relate it, you may have heard it, but the last part of the story, i.e. the effect which it had on Hadrat ʽUmar رضي الله عنه is not normally related. I am astonished as to why it is not related, whereas I consider it to be the essence and soul of the story. This is because Hadrat ʽUmar's رضي الله عنه humility is much greater than what the old man said. Although he caught the old man in such a situation, he restrained himself after hearing whatever the old man said to him, and then begged him to forgive him. This is no easy and insignificant matter. Do you think anyone can do this today? Without doubt, no one can equal the actions of the Sahābah رضي الله عنهم.

Do you not see! The dancing women are seated before the old man, and the wine is placed in front of him. The Amīr al-Mu'minīn reaches there all of a sudden. A person is caught committing a sin from which he cannot extricate himself. Despite this, the old man quoted verses which cast everything aside. Now there was neither an inspector nor a criminal. Everyone was subdued and the entire assembly was reduced to crying – the entire scene changed.

Hadrat ʿUmar ؓ had went to reprimand the old man, but the tables were turned and the old man took him to account. This resulted in Hadrat ʿUmar ؓ asking him for pardon, leaving there while crying and thinking to himself of his own destruction. He constantly said to himself: "You know well that a person tries to conceal such a condition [of consuming wine and being in the company of dancing women] from his own family and children. He will now think to himself that the Amīr al-Mu'minīn has seen him. How ashamed he will feel about it!" (*Risālah Maʿrifat-e-Haqq*)

Hadrat ʿUmar ؓ asks the Sahābah ؓ to pardon him

When Hadrat ʿUmar ؓ became the caliph, he practised strictly on the same principles. In other words, just as Hadrat Abū Bakr ؓ allowed people to take revenge from him for his excesses, and the subjects to take revenge from the governors for their excesses, Hadrat ʿUmar ؓ adhered strictly to this and allowed people to take revenge from him for his excesses on several occasions. When he was asked about his severity in this regard, he said: "I saw Rasūlullāh ﷺ fulfilling the rights of others, and Hadrat Abū Bakr ؓ doing the same. So I too will fulfil the rights of others."

Here is one example of how particular Hadrat ʿUmar ؓ was in this regard. He beat a person as a punishment for a crime which he committed, so the person said: "I committed it in ignorance. I

ought to have been taught about it, and not punished. Had I committed it wittingly, I ought to be pardoned and not beaten." Hadrat 'Umar ﷺ replied immediately: "You are right. Here, take revenge from me [i.e. now you must beat me]." (*Guldista-e-'Ilm wa Nazar*, p. 71)

Hadrat 'Umar ﷺ is reduced to tears on hearing an old woman's complaint

An admonitory incident took place during his journey to Syria. Hadrat 'Umar ﷺ was returning to Madīnah when he saw a tent. He got off his conveyance and went close to the tent. He saw an old woman and asked her: "Do you know anything about 'Umar?" She replied: "Yes, he has already departed from Syria, but may Allāh ﷻ destroy him. To this day I did not receive a single grain from him." Hadrat 'Umar ﷺ said: "How can 'Umar know about conditions so far away [from Madīnah]?" She replied: "Why does he assume the caliphate if he does not know about his subjects?" Hadrat 'Umar ﷺ was reduced to tears. (*al-Fārūq*, p. 202)

Glory to Allāh! This was the condition of Hadrat 'Umar's ﷺ soft-heartedness, whereas the world considers him to be a strict person. We learn from this that his strictness was for Allāh's sake. Each occasion requires a different response. If the deputy of Rasūlullāh ﷺ cannot do this, who else can?! May Allāh ﷻ inspire us all to emulate him.

H̲ad̲rat ʿUmar ﵁ was most conscious of his responsibilities and would personally go on patrol at night to see to the welfare of his subjects. If he saw any unlawful activity, he would express his disapproval. If he saw any person in difficulty, he would see to his needs. This is related in history books.

Rasūlullāh ﷺ informs H̲ad̲rat ʿĀ'ishah ﵂ of her error

عن عائشة رضي الله عنها قالت قلت للنبي صلى الله عليه وسلم حسبك من صفية كذا، تعني قصيرة. فقال لقد قلت كلمة لو مزج بها البحر لمزجته. (رواه أحمد والترمذي وأبو داؤد)

H̲ad̲rat ʿĀ'ishah *rad̲iyallāhu ʿanhā* narrates: "I said: 'O Rasūlullāh! What do you need S̲afīyyah for?' She meant that she was very short. Rasūlullāh ﷺ said: 'You made a statement [which is so deplorable] that if it was mixed with the water of the ocean, it would spoil all the water.'"

We learn from this H̲adīth that Rasūlullāh ﷺ would not tolerate inappropriate statements even from his most beloved wife. Rather, he reprimanded her so that she does not make such statements again.

Rasūlullāh ﷺ expresses his disapproval of Hadrat Zaynab's *radiyallāhu ʿanhā* attitude

عن عائشة قالت اعتل بعير لصفية وعند زينب فضل ظهر، فقال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم لزينب أعطيها بعيرا، فقالت أنا أعطي تلك اليهودية، فغضب رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم فهجرها ذا الحجة والمحرم وبعض صفر. (أبو داؤد، ص٦٣٢).

Hadrat ʿĀ'ishah *radiyallāhu ʿanhā* narrates: Hadrat Safīyyah's *radiyallāhu ʿanhā* camel fell ill and Hadrat Zaynab *radiyallāhu ʿanhā* had an extra camel. Rasūlullāh ﷺ said to her: "Give one camel to her." Hadrat Zaynab *radiyallāhu ʿanhā* replied: "You want me to give a camel to that Jewess?" Rasūlullāh ﷺ became angry and stayed away from her during the months of Dhū al-Hijjah, Muharram, and a portion of Safar.

أخرج الإمام أحمد من حديث صفية أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم حج بنسائه فلما كانوا في الطريق برك جمل صفية بنت حيي، فقال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم لزينب بنت جحش (يا زينب افقري أختك صفية جملا) وكانت من أكثرهن ظهرا، فقالت أنا أفقر يهوديتك؟ فغضب النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم حين سمع ذلك منها فهجرها فلم يكلمها حتى قدم مكة وأيام منى في سفره حتى رجع إلى المدينة، والمحرم وصفر، فلم يأتيها ولم يقسم لها، ويئست منه فلما كان شهر ربيع الأول دخل عليها.

وهذا من الإثم العظيم أن يوصف الإنسان بالكفر بعد إسلامه، ولذلك استحقت زينب عقوبة الهجر. (من معين الشمائل ٨٣).

Imām Ahmad *rahimahullāh* narrates a Hadīth of Hadrat Safīyyah *radiyallāhu ʿanhā*: Rasūlullāh ﷺ went on hajj with his pure wives. On the way, Hadrat Safīyyah bint Huyay's camel died. Rasūlullāh ﷺ said to Zaynab bint Jahsh: "O Zaynab! Give a camel to your sister, Safīyyah." [He said this to her] because she had the most camels from among his wives. She asked: "You want me to give a camel to your Jewess?" Rasūlullāh ﷺ was angered by her words and remained aloof from her without speaking to her. He did not speak to her even when he came to Makkah, during his stay in Minā, and until he returned to Madīnah. He did not go to her in Muharram and Safar, nor did he set aside a turn for her. This caused her to lose hope in his coming back to her. He eventually went to her in Rabīʿ al-Awwal.

It is a major sin for a person to describe another with words of *kufr* after the latter embraced Islam. This is why Hadrat Zaynab *radiyallāhu ʿanhā* was eligible for separation.

We learn from the above that Rasūlullāh ﷺ would not permit any concession with regard to rectifying the character of his wives as well. This is an excellent example for us. May Allāh ﷾ inspire us all to practise. Āmīn.

The story of Hadrat Fudayl ibn ʿIyād's *rahimahullāh* repentance

The story of Hadrat Fudayl ibn ʿIyād's *rahimahullāh* repentance is well known, but the importance which he gave to fulfilling the rights of fellow humans is worthy of emulation by every Muslim. This is because rights of fellow humans are not pardoned by mere repentance. Rather, it is essential for the person to fulfil the rights or to obtain pardon from the person whose rights he forfeited. Hadrat Fudayl ibn ʿIyād *rahimahullāh* fulfilled this thoroughly. This is related by the famous personality Hadrat Shāh al-ʿĀlamīn Shāh ʿAbd ar-Razzāq Jhanjhānwī *rahimahullāh* in his book, *Sahā'if Maʿrifat*. This book has been translated in very simple language by Doctor Tanwīr Ahmad ʿAlawī. I am quoting the story of his repentance from the translation:

Fudayl ibn ʿIyād *rahimahullāh* was initially a highway robber. When he stole anything from any person, he had the habit of recording the person's name, his father's name, the place where he stole it, and the date on which he stole it in a register. When Allāh ﷻ turned to him with His grace and his time for repentance approached, he attacked a caravan and all the people of the caravan trembled with fear. Fudayl *rahimahullāh* captured all their possessions. One of the people of the caravan was reciting the Qur'ān and came to this verse:

أَلَمْ يَأْنِ لِلَّذِيْنَ آمَنُوْا أَنْ تَخْشَعَ قُلُوْبُهُمْ لِذِكْرِ اللهِ

"Has the time not arrived for the believers' hearts to tremble with Allāh's remembrance?"

On hearing this, Fudayl *rahimahullāh* called out: "The time has come." He then announced to all the people to come and take back their belongings. But they did not come out of fear he was summoning them in order to kill them. Hadrat Fudayl *rahimahullāh* begged them to come and said: "O Muslims! I have repented over my actions and I am ashamed." They said: "O Fudayl! If you are speaking the truth, leave our goods and depart from here. We will come and take our goods ourselves." Fudayl *rahimahullāh* said: "Some of your goods may get lost or destroyed, and I will have to give account for them on the day of Resurrection. You should therefore come before me, identify your belongings, and take them away." On hearing these words of reassurance, they came forward, identified their respective belongings, and took them away.

Fudayl *rahimahullāh* asked them for pardon and satisfied them. He then returned home and made it his practice to look at his register and return the goods to whomever they belonged. In this way, he pleased all his enemies and opponents, and was left with no goods whatsoever of this world.

He was looking at his register one day and noticed that he had usurped 40 000 dīnārs from a Jew of Naysābūr, and he had not returned this amount to him as yet, and not obtained his pardon.

H̲ad̲rat Fud̲ayl *rah̲imahullāh* seeks pardon from a Jew

He went to the Jew and said: "My name is Fud̲ayl. I had stolen 40 000 dīnārs from you at a certain place in a certain year. I have now repented from highway robbery, and returned all the wealth from whomever I had stolen it. But I do not have anything to give back to you. I have come to you to give you the right of doing whatever you like to me. You could ask me to work for you in exchange for that amount, or you could pardon me."

The Jew said: "Give me back my due so that I may be pleased with you."

Fud̲ayl *rah̲imahullāh* began working for the Jew and serving him. The Jew had read in the Taurāh that if a person from the *ummah* of Muh̲ammad ﷺ repents sincerely, and he were to place his hand on soil, it will turn to gold. He felt this was the ideal opportunity to put him to the test. He went to his house, filled a purse with soil, and placed it on a shelf. He came outside and said to Fud̲ayl: "I have taken an oath I will not take anything from you, but you will have to do one work for me. Go into my house and you will find a purse on a

certain shelf. Bring it to me so that I may be pleased with you."

Fu<u>d</u>ayl *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* went into the house, brought the purse, and placed it before him. Look at Allāh's ﷻ power! The purse was filled with the exact amount of dīnārs which Fu<u>d</u>ayl *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* had stolen from him. This had a deep impact on his Jew's heart. He said to Fu<u>d</u>ayl: "You filled my copper of *kufr* with the pure gold of *īmān*. You may now invite me to Islam, your religion is certainly the truth." The Jew together with another seventy people embraced Islam. The *Mathnawī* says in this regard:

"If your face is moistened with tears, even the soil in your hand will turn to gold." (*<u>S</u>a<u>h</u>ā'if Maʿrifat*, p. 176)

<u>H</u>a<u>d</u>rat Sayyid A<u>h</u>mad Rifāʿī *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* seeks pardon

A group of *faqīrs* met him on one occasion. They began hurling obscenities at him, and said: "O you Dajjāl! O you who considers the *<u>h</u>arām* to be *<u>h</u>alāl*! O you who alters the Qur'ān! O you atheist! O you dog!" On hearing all this, Sayyid A<u>h</u>mad *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* removed his head covering, kissed the ground and said: "O my masters! Forgive your slave." He then began kissing their hands and feet, and said: "Be pleased with me. Your forbearance can accommodate me." When there was no way for them to refuse, they said: "We

never came across a *faqīr* like you. You are accepting whatever we are saying to you without becoming angry in the least.” He said: “This is also by virtue of your blessings”

He then turned to his friends and said: “It was very good that I provided them the opportunity of giving vent to whatever was concealed within them. In other words, they placed the weight which was in their hearts onto me. If the truth be told, I was most deserving of whatever they said, because they may have well said it to someone who would not be able to bear it. This would have worsened the situation and caused more problems.”

He used to say: “The purity of the heart can only be achieved when no mark of malice remains in it – neither towards one’s enemies, to one’s friends, nor to any of Allāh’s ﷻ creations. If a person develops such a condition, the wild animals in the jungles and the birds in the nests will have affinity with him, and the deepest mysteries will be exposed to him.” (*Aqwāl-e-Salaf*, vol. 2, p. 147)

Note: Glory to Allāh! Look at the forbearance and piety of our elders, and how they taught this to their associates. It is sufficient for us to emulate them.

H̲ad̲rat Tīnātī *rah̲imahullāh* acknowledges his mistake

He had made a promise to Allāh ﷻ that he will never extend his hand with desire towards anything which grows forth from the ground. But he forgot this promise, he broke a few shoots from a wild plant, placed them in his mouth, and was chewing on them when he remembered his promise. He threw away the shoots which were in his hands, spat out whatever was in his mouth, and sat down remorsefully.

He relates: "I did not even get a chance to sit down comfortably when a few people on horseback and others on foot surrounded me, and said: "Stand up!" They escorted me until they took me to the shore of Alexandria. I saw a leader before whom were a few Africans who had committed the crime of highway robbery. They saw that I was dark-skinned like them, and coincidentally, I had a shield, arrows and a sword with me. And so, they were all convinced that I was also a criminal like the other Africans. They chopped off their hands and feet, and it was now my turn. They ordered me to extend my hands. I extended them and they chopped them off. I was then ordered to extend my legs. I extended them, raised my head and said: 'O my Allāh! O my Master! My hands had committed a wrong [by breaking the plant], but what wrong did my legs commit?' A horseman arrived suddenly, overpowered the leader, and said: 'This is a righteous man, and he is well known by the name

Abū al-Khayr Tīnātī.' The leader lowered himself, began kissing my cut hand, embraced me, cried to me, and began asking me to pardon him.' I said: 'I pardoned you the moment you chopped my hand, and I said to my self:

يد جنت فقطعت

"This is a hand which had committed a crime, and so it has been chopped off." (Tabaqāt Kubrā, p. 94, *Aqwāl-e-Salaf*, vol. 2, p. 85)

Note: Unfortunately, we do not know how many obvious and concealed sins we commit but we do not even perceive them, whereby we could have worried about having them pardoned or making up for them. May Allāh ﷻ inspire us all to realize this, and may He protect us from His displeasure and punishment. Āmīn.

Hadrat Dhun Nūn Misrī *rahimahullāh* acknowledges his sins

One year there was no water in the Nile river, and consequently, the signs of drought were visibly seen. Some people went out into the desert to beg for water. They cried profusely and beseeched [Allāh ﷻ], but there was still no rain. Hadrat Dhun Nūn Misrī *rahimahullāh* was also informed about the people's predicament and was requested to make *du'ā'* to Allāh ﷻ. They said to him: "You are an accepted servant of Allāh ﷻ and the *du'ā'* of His accepted servants is not rejected."

Shaykh [Saʿdī] writes: I heard that when Hadrat Dhun Nūn Misrī *rahimahullāh* was told this, he left for Madyan. The moment he left Egypt, the rains started falling. On reaching Madyan, he was informed of the rains, and of the river brimming with water. An *ʿārif* asked him: 'What was the reason for your leaving Egypt?' He replied: 'I heard that a drought comes because of the evil deeds of evil people. When I pondered over this, I did not see anyone more sinful than me. So I left Egypt thinking to myself: 'Why should these people suffer unnecessarily because of my wrong-doings?'"

Note: Glory to Allāh! Look at how he practised on this teaching of Rasūlullāh ﷺ: "I am the one who acknowledges and confesses his sin…". Without doubt, the rains fell by virtue of his emulating this Sunnah of Rasūlullāh ﷺ. He went out of the city and provided a practical example of acknowledging sins and seeking forgiveness. Consequently, Allāh's ﷻ ocean of mercy poured down. Glory to Allāh! Such was the high level of his humility and self-effacement. He did not consider anyone more sinful than himself in the whole of Egypt. He was convinced that the rain was withheld because of his sins. Yet, he enjoyed such a high status among the creation that the king announced: "It is a serious wrong if Hadrat Dhun Nūn Misrī is not mentioned in any assembly where the *auliyā'* of Allāh ﷻ are mentioned."

This is an affirmation of the Hadīth:

من تواضع لله رفعه الله

"Allāh ﷻ elevates the one who humbles himself for Allāh's sake."

May Allāh ﷻ inspire us all to practise on this teaching, and bestow us with genuine humility and total self-effacement.

Immoral women acknowledge their sins

A drought was experienced in a certain place. The people engaged in a lot of *du'ā'* but there was no sign of any rain. The immoral women of the city gathered and said: "We are the most sinful, and this is why there is no rain. If we repent, the rains will come down." They all proceeded to an open field, made arrangements for a screen all around them [to prevent others from seeing them], and beseeched Allāh ﷻ. They acknowledged their sins, and repented and sought forgiveness with devotion and sincerity. The rains came down.

Hadrat Khwājah Bāqī Billāh *rahimahullāh* acknowledges his sins

Hadrat Khwājah *rahimahullāh* never hesitated in acknowledging his sins and considering himself a sinner. Let alone among his own companions, he did not even consider himself superior to the masses.

It is said that a youngster who was his neighbour used to commit every type of sin. Although

H̲ad̲rat was fully aware of this, he accommodated the youth. His *murīd*, Khwājah H̲ussām ad-Dīn Dehlawī *rah̲imahullāh* complained to the authorities about the youth and had him imprisoned. When the shaykh came to know of it, he was quite displeased with his *murīd*, and remained aloof from him. The *murīd* said: "H̲ad̲rat, he is a flagrant sinner." H̲ad̲rat said: "Aah!" in a painful tone and said: "Yes, you possess virtue and piety, that is why you recognized his sin and iniquity. But I do not consider myself better than him. That is why I did not allow my own self to complain about him to the authorities." He then made efforts to have the youth released. He repented and became a righteous person.

When any of his *murīds* erred, he would say: "It was actually my error which became manifest through him." (*Tārīkh Daʿwat wa ʿAzīmat*, vol. 4, p. 146)

ʿAllāmah Ibn al-Jauzī *rah̲imahullāh* acknowledges his sins

He relates his own story in his book, *S̲ayd al-Khāt̲ir*[1]:

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[1] H̲ad̲rat Maulānā Abul Hasan ʿAlī Miyā Nadwī *rah̲imahullāh* writes with regard to *S̲ayd al-Khāt̲ir*: "*S̲ayd al-Khāt̲ir* is an album in which the author penned his innermost emotions, informal thoughts, life experiences, and scattered thoughts

I experienced a situation on one occasion in which I had to ask Allāh ﷻ and make *duʿā'* to Him. I made *duʿā'* and asked Allāh ﷻ. A righteous person joined me in my *duʿā'*. I saw some of the effects of acceptance, and said to my self: "This is the result of the righteous person's *duʿā'*, and not because of my *duʿā'*." I said to my self: "I have knowledge of my own sins and mistakes which would certainly not make my *duʿā'* acceptable. But it may well be that my *duʿā'* was accepted because the righteous person is protected against such sins which I know I committed. But there is a difference between the two of us: I am sorrowful and remorseful for my shortcomings, while he is happy over his condition. And there are times when acknowledging one's sins are more beneficial."

He continues:

"There is also a similarity between us: Neither of us is asking for any grace on the basis of our actions. So if I have a broken heart, a head lowered in remorse, and say while acknowledging my sins: 'O Allāh! Give me solely out of Your grace for I am empty-handed', I have hope Allāh ﷻ will accept my *duʿā'*. On the other hand, the righteous person may rely on his good deeds, and this reliance may be an obstacle for him. O my soul! Do not break my heart any further because

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and incidents. He acknowledges many of his weaknesses and mistakes without any hesitation."

it is already quite broken. I have such knowledge of my conditions which demand humility from me. I now acknowledge my shortcomings. I am really in need of what I asked You for. I have full conviction in the grace of the One whom I asked. The righteous person does not have all this. So, O Allāh! Bless him in his worship. My acknowledgement of my sins is in itself a great thing." (*Tārīkh Daʿwat wa ʿAzīmat*, vol. 1, p. 243)

Note: Just as we ponder and reflect over our worldly issues, these pious elders ponder and reflect over their *Dīnī* and internal conditions. It is essential for us to do this because it is very beneficial and will ensure our progress.

Hadrat Shāh ʿAbd al-Qādir Sāhib *rahimahullāh* asks pardon from an old woman

I heard this story on numerous occasions from my shaykh, Hadrat Murshidī Maulānā Muhammad Ahmad Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. Hadrat Maulānā Shāh ʿAbd al-Qādir Sāhib Dehlawī *rahimahullāh* did not accept an ordinary gift from an old woman for some reason or the other. The poor woman went back broken hearted with her gift. After this, the numerous spiritual gifts and victories which Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* used to receive ceased completely. After several days he began thinking over the reason for this. He pondered and reflected, and after a few days, he came to the conclusion that he had refused the gift of the old woman, and this is why he is

being punished in this manner. It was night time, he proceeded immediately to the old woman. He knocked on her door, she asked for his identity, and he replied: "ʿAbd al-Qādir." He added: "Ammā [a term of respect for an old woman]! Please give me the gift which I had refused." She gave him the gift and said: "Hadrat, I have been restless ever since you refused it. I have not been experiencing any comfort at any time. I am crying over my misfortune ever since." Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* was much affected by her words, sought her pardon, and returned.

Note: Glory to Allāh! What an admonitory story! Shāh ʿAbd al-Qādir *rahimahullāh* was denied spiritual gifts and victories because he broke the heart of an old woman. Now if a person were to break the heart of a *Sāhib-e-nisbat* (a close friend of Allāh ﷻ) and cause pain to him, what will be the consequence of it? We seek refuge in Allāh ﷻ.

Hadrat Sayyid Ahmad Shahīd *rahimahullāh* acknowledges his sins

Miyā ʿAbd al-Qayyūm Sāhib was in charge of Hadrat Sayyid Ahmad Shahīd's *rahimahullāh* kitchen. ʿAbdullāh Behre, who was an associate of the Maulānā Sāhib also joined in the affairs of the kitchen. Qādir Bakhsh Khān Kanjpūrī used to prepare Hadrat's meals and he was a master cook. He was cooking meat one day and the water in it was less. The *adhān* for *maghrib* was called, so he said to Hājī ʿAbdullāh Sāhib: "You must see to the meat while I am gone for salāh." Saying

this, he left for the salāh. Hājī ʿAbdullāh Sāhib removed the fire from under the meat pot, kept it aside, and also joined the congregation for the salāh. Qādir Bakhsh returned after the salāh and saw that some of the meat was burned. He removed the meat which was burnt, and added water to the remainder to make a gravy. But the burning smell remained in the food. When the food was ready, he took it to Hadrat Sayyid Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. On tasting it, he said to Qādir Bakhsh Khān: "What type of food did you prepare today? How come it is burnt?" He offered his excuse saying: "I asked Hājī ʿAbdullāh to watch over the meat while I came for the salāh. But he also joined the salāh. This caused the meat to get burnt." On hearing this, Hadrat Sayyid Sāhib *rahimahullāh* – contrary to his habit - spontaneously remarked: "You left him in charge of the meat and went for salāh. That wretched fellow did not watch over it, now the meat is burnt and cannot be eaten."

Hadrat Sayyid Sāhib *rahimahullāh* is advised by his *murīds*

On hearing these uncustomary harsh words from Hadrat Sayyid Sāhib *rahimahullāh*, all who were present remained absolutely silent. No one uttered a word. Hadrat handed the plate of meat to Qādir Bakhsh Khān, and ate the *rotī* with *dhāll*. After having his supper, Hadrat proceeded for the *ʿishā salāh*, returned to his place, and seated himself as was his habit.

Qādī ʿAlā’ ad-Dīn, Miyājī Chishtī, Maulwī Wārith ʿAlī, Maulwī Imām ad-Dīn, Hāfiz Sābir Sāhib and others discussed the matter among themselves, and said: “Hadrat uttered the word ‘wretched’ in total contradiction to his habit. It is far-fetched for him to utter such a word. We have to inform him of this. He constantly tells us: ‘I am also a human. If I say anything against the Sharīʿah, you’ll must certainly inform me. If you do not do this, I will take you to account on the day of Resurrection.’ It is *wājib* on us to inform him so that we can absolve ourselves.”

They all agreed, proceeded towards Hadrat, and sat before him as was their habit.

The *murīds* draw attention to Hadrat Sayyid Sāhib’s *rahimahullāh* oversight

Maulwī Imām ad-Dīn Sāhib Bangālī and Miyājī Chishtī Sāhib Burhānwī *rahimahullāh* then spoke to Hadrat saying: “All the brothers who are present here want to know: When the meat got burnt today, you referred to Hājī ʿAbdullāh as a wretched person. Can such a word be uttered against a Muslim?” On hearing their question, Hadrat remained silent for a long while, and said: “No one should say such a thing to a Muslim.”

Hadrat Sayyid Sāhib *rahimahullāh* acknowledges his mistake openly

“This word was uttered by me unwittingly and unintentionally. I committed a major wrong. You all have done well in informing me about it.”

Hadrat then called for Hājī ʿAbdullāh and all the others who were working in the kitchen. A large number of people from each group were present. Hājī ʿAbdullāh was a very simple-minded, good-natured and righteous man. Hadrat seated him next to him and said: “Hājī Sāhib! I committed a wrong against you. In my anger, I unwittingly called you a wretched man. Please pardon me this mistake for Allāh’s sake, and embrace me.”

Hājī ʿAbdullāh was slightly deaf, and became nervous. He began apologizing and said: “Hadrat, I burnt your curry and I regret it. Please pardon me for Allāh’s sake.” Hadrat shouted in his ears saying: “It is not your fault in the least. It was I who committed a wrong. It was I who called you a wretched man. Forgive me.” On hearing this, he held Hadrat’s hand and said: “Hadrat, I have pardoned you. Make *duʿā’* for me and ask Allāh سبحانه وتعالى to forgive me.” He then embraced him.

Hadrat then spoke for a long time, as though he was delivering a talk. He said: “Every Muslim must do his utmost not to utter words like *‘kāfir, mushrik, munāfiq, mardūd*, etc. (unbeliever, polytheist, hypocrite, wretched/accursed, etc.) against any Muslim. He must restrain his tongue

from uttering such words. If they are uttered unintentionally, he must repent for them. Uttering words of this nature causes a deficiency in one's *īmān*."

Hadrat went at length in speaking about words which are prohibited in the Sharīʿah. His manner of speech had a great impact on all who were present, they experienced a unique condition which is beyond description. He concluded his talk with a *duʿā'*, and the people returned to their respective tents. They began speaking among themselves, and said: "Hadrat's uttering of this word [wretched] today was also not devoid of divine wisdom because he spoke about other words which are prohibited in the Sharīʿah and brought our attention to them."

Maulānā Muhammād Ismāʿīl [Shahīd] Sāhib returned from Amb after many days. Some people related to him how Hadrat uttered the word "wretched", and the manner in which he repented for having uttered it.

Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Ismāʿīl Sāhib Shahīd's *rahimahullāh* words of advice

He said: "When the *Auliyā'* of Allāh say something contrary to the Sharīʿah due to human constraints, and repent for having uttered it, their utterance is in essence not devoid of wisdom and benefit. Nor does the utterance of such words decrease their rank. On the contrary, their rank increases. When Hadrat Ādam ate wheat in

Paradise and was expelled from it, he undoubtedly disobeyed Allāh ﷻ. But he repented to Allāh ﷻ for his mistake and Allāh ﷻ pardoned him. But the divine wisdom behind his mistake was this: He was expelled from Paradise, but divine wisdom willed Prophets, *auliyā'*, believers, and Muslims to be born from him, and for the factory of this world and the Hereafter to function. Had he not been expelled from Paradise, all this would not have happened."

"Or, for example, Hadrat Mūsā عليه السلام killed a Copt. He became frightened of Pharaoh, went away to Madyan, and repented for his mistake. Allāh ﷻ pardoned him, caused him to get married to the daughter of Hadrat Shuʿayb عليه السلام, and bestowed him with a staff. A few years later, he left Madyan with his wife and proceeded towards Egypt. When he was near Mt. Tūr, Allāh ﷻ bestowed him with prophet-hood. Now think over all the divine wisdoms from the time he killed the Copt. Had he not committed this mistake, how would these benefits and bestowals been realized?"

"Alternatively, we can consider the condition of these *buzurgs* like a river. When it pours heavily, all the dirty and impure water from the drains together with grass and straw flow into the river and make it dirty. People who do not understand think that the river water has become impure, and can no longer be used for purification. Whereas, the river remains pure just as it was. In fact, its water level rises and the dirt disappears after some time. The creation of Allāh ﷻ benefits

from it to the full." Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Ismāʿīl Sāhib Shahīd *rahimahullāh* provided several other examples in this regard. (*Sīrat Sayyid Ahmad Shahīd*)

Note: *Mā shā' Allāh!* What a beautiful story on the subject of acknowledging one's sins and mistakes. It is worthy of emulation by all of us. As for the wisdoms explained by Hadrat Maulānā Ismāʿīl Shahīd *rahimahullāh*, they are vast gates of knowledge and wisdom which contain comprehensive principles and enlightening themes.

Just ponder! Hadrat Sayyid Ahmad Shahīd *rahimahullāh* was on a journey in which he was to engage in a great jihād for Allāh's ﷻ cause. But neither he nor his devoted associates tolerated the hurt which he caused to a cook. This is because they all focused on the lofty goal of pleasing Allāh ﷻ for which they were undertaking this blessed journey. At the same time, they were mindful of Allāh's ﷻ independence, i.e. Allāh ﷻ was not bothered in the least about their sacrifices. If they committed the slightest excess – e.g. hurting the feelings of even the most ordinary person among them – Allāh ﷻ will not tolerate it at all.

Unfortunately, no sooner someone starts a *Dīnī* effort, he is criticized and castigated from all sides. In fact, some people go to the extent of belittling and scorning the great personalities of

the past. Look at the excellent advice given by a poet:

"Do not speak ill of past peoples so that your own good name does not become tainted."

Just ponder! We are prohibited from such abhorrent practices even in our salāh, fasting, hajj, zakāt, etc. and these compulsory duties are rendered null and void through them. This fact is known to those who have knowledge of the Qur'ān and Sunnah.

O people! Read and study these stories of our elders with concentration and with the purpose of practising on them. Rectify your selves so that you may be honoured with Allāh's ﷻ pleasure. May Allāh ﷻ inspire us all to practise on this. Āmīn.

Hadrat Maulānā Rahmatullāh Sāhib Kīrānwī *rahimahullāh* acknowledges his mistakes

I now relate a story of Maulānā Rahmatullāh Sāhib Kīrānwī *rahimahullāh* with regard to acknowledging one's mistakes. Maulānā Rahmatullāh Sāhib Kīrānwī *rahimahullāh* was an erudite *'ālim* who wrote *Izhār al-Haqq*, his *magnum opus* in refutation of Christianity. This book is not only well-known to the *'ulamā'*, but also in the Arab lands, non-Arab lands, and Europe. It was he who established Madrasah Saulatiyah in Makkah Mu'azzamah. This

Madrasah played a major role in proliferating the Qur'ān and Sunnah. In fact, I learnt that in the beginning, many of the lecturers in Jāmi'ah Islāmiyyah Madīnah Munawwarah [the Islamic university in Madīnah] had studied at this Madrasah. *Al-hamdulillāh*, it still continues as the only Hanafī *madrasah* [in Saudi Arabia]. Its administrator at present is Maulānā Hashīm Sāhib.

I now relate the story of Maulānā Rahmatullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* which Maulānā Shāh Wasīyyullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* used to relate quite often. Hadrat Maulānā Rahmatullāh Sāhib Kīrānwī *rahimahullāh* was delivering a talk at some place on the subject of the importance of a *madrasah*. When Hadrat Hājī Imdādullāh Sāhib Muhājir Makkī *rahimahullāh* heard it, he said: "If what you are saying is correct, then you will destroy all the *masājid* (plural of *musjid*) and replace them with *madāris*." This caused some ill-feeling between the two and consequently, they stopped speaking to each other.

However, the Hadīth prohibits a believer from severing ties for more than three days. Moreover, it speaks highly of the person who takes the first step at reconciliation. Bearing this in mind, Hadrat Maulānā Rahmatullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* went to Hadrat Hājī Imdādullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* and asked him for forgiveness. Hadrat Hājī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* said: "Maulānā, you have won. Because you are an *'ālim*, you came within three days and reconciled.

As for me, because I am not an *ʿālim*, I did not get the *taufīq* (inspiration) to do this."

Note: Glory to Allāh! Look at the humility and self-effacement of Hadrat Maulānā Rahmatullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* when he came to apologize. And look at Hadrat Hājī Sāhib's *rahimahullāh* magnanimity when he praised the Maulānā for taking the first step at reconciliation, and acknowledged the level of his knowledge and merit.

A story from the life of Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh*

Hadrat Maulānā Rahmatullāh *rahimahullāh* was walking on the street on one occasion. A municipal worker was sweeping the street at the time. An *ʿālim* who was a close associate of the Maulānā went forward to the sweeper and said to him: "Stop sweeping for a short while so that my Hadrat is saved from the dirt getting onto his body." Hadrat heard this and said: "What right did you have to stop him from his municipal work. He is fulfilling the responsibility of his job. What do you think, I am a Pharaoh!?" (*Maʿrifat-e-Ilāhīyyah, Majmūʿah Ifādāt* Hadrat Maulānā ʿAbd al-Ghanī Sāhib *rahimahullāh*, p. 380)

After quoting this incident, Hadrat Maulānā ʿAbd al-Ghanī Sāhib Phulpūrī *rahimahullāh* writes: "*Allāhu akbar*! Look at his unique level of servitude!"

A few lines further, he quotes a story of Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī *rahimahullāh*:

"A *hājī Sāhib* from our district went to visit Hadrat Thānwī *rahimahullāh*. It was a Friday, and Hadrat entered while wearing his *kurtah* and pants. The *hājī Sāhib* was an elderly person and quite informal by nature. He said: 'Hadrat, why are you not wearing an *ʿabā* (cloak)?' He replied: 'An *ʿabā* is for senior people.' The man said: 'Hadrat, you are also a senior person.' Hadrat Thānwī *rahimahullāh* said: 'Where am I a senior person!? I have not rectified even a single mannerism of mine as yet.'" (*Maʿrifat-e-Ilāhīyyah*, p. 381)

Note: When a person is cognizant of Allāh's ﷻ greatness, he considers himself to be filled with faults. Consequently, Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* has written an entire apology title *al-ʿUdhr wa an-Nudhr*. I am quoting it here.

Hadrat Hakīm al-Ummat Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānwī's *rahimahullāh* apology

All praise is due to Allāh ﷻ, peace and salutations to Rasūlullāh ﷺ. My reason for writing this article is that I am presently between sixty and seventy years old. As per the Hadīth, this age is the limit of the majority of the *ummah* of Muhammad ﷺ. While a person has to be forever prepared for death, he must make even more preparations when he reaches such an age in his life. After

setting right one's *īmān*, this preparation entails setting right one's actions and deeds. And the most important of these deeds is for a person to set right his affairs and matters with his fellow humans (*ẖuqūq al-ʿibād*) in all aspects. There are only two ways of setting this right. (1) fulfilling their rights, (2) seeking their pardon.

Al-ẖamdulillāh, I never committed a shortcoming wittingly in fulfilling rights. However, I have certainly been lacking in asking for pardon and forgiveness from those who have claims over me. This shortcoming is quite common. However, such commonness does not give any Sharʿī concession to anyone. It is therefore *wājib* on me to fulfil this obligation with full importance to it.

There are two ways of doing this: (1) I must address each person individually either verbally or by writing to him, (2) I must seek pardon and forgiveness through a general address. There are several reasons why the first way is not easy: (1) I cannot remember all of them, (2) I cannot meet each and every one of them, or I do not know there whereabouts, (3) I may not remember what right I owe to each person at the time when I meet him, (4) I am unable to undertake a journey because of certain impediments, (5) I do not have the courage to accord so much attention to this.

This is why I chose the second and easier option, and am publishing this apology. In essence, I am addressing all those whose rights I forfeited wittingly or unwittingly. This address will contain

a few parts presented in a particular sequence. Since I am required by the Sharī‘ah to convey this to my addressees, I will first quote a few Ahādīth which are related to this subject. I will then present my address in sequence. Inspiration is from Allāh ﷻ alone.

A translation of the Ahādīth

1. Hadrat Anas ؓ narrates that Rasūlullāh ﷺ said: "Any person who owes a due to a person with regard to his honour should have it forgiven today before the arrival of the time in which neither dīnār nor dirham will be of any use. If the person has any good deeds, they will be taken away from him in accordance with what he owes to the other. If he has no good deeds, the evil deeds of the other will be placed on his shoulders."[1]

2. Hadrat Abū Hurayrah ؓ narrates that Rasūlullāh ﷺ said: "There was a person who used to give things to people on credit. He used to say to his employee: 'When you go to any person in financial difficulty, you must pardon him [the debt which he owes to me]. Hopefully, if we do this, Allāh ﷻ will pardon us for the rights which we owe to Him.' When this person passed away

[1] رواه البخاري ومسلم، مشكوة، باب الظلم.

and presented himself before Allāh ﷻ, He pardoned him."[1]

3. Hadrat Jaudān ؓ narrates that Rasūlullāh ﷺ said: "If a person seeks pardon from his Muslim brother and the latter does not pardon him, he [the latter person] will be committing a crime like a tax collector who collects unlawful tax." (Narrated by Abū Dā'ūd in his *Marāsīl*, and by Ibn Mājah through two good chains of transmission). Another narration states that Rasūlullāh ﷺ said: "If a person apologizes to his Muslim brother and the latter does not accept his apology, he will not be permitted to come near my Haud-e-Kauthar." (*Targhīb wa Tarhīb*)

4. Hadrat Anas ؓ narrates that Rasūlullāh ﷺ said: "From among the ways of atoning for *ghībah* (backbiting) is for you to seek forgiveness in favour of the person against whom you committed this evil. You must say: 'O Allāh! Forgive me and him.'" (Narrated by Bayhaqī in *Daʿwāt Kabīr*. He says that there is some weakness in its chain of transmission (*sanad*)). But this is not harmful in such instances. (*Mishkāt*)

5. Hadrat Abū Ayyūb Ansārī ؓ narrates that Rasūlullāh ﷺ said: "It is not lawful for a person to sever ties for more than three days from his brother in such a manner that they meet each other while each one turns his face away from the

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[1] رواه البخاري ومسلم، مشكوة، باب الإفلاس.

other. The better of the two is the one who offers *salām* first.” (Narrated by Bukhārī and Muslim)[1]

A sequenced presentation of the address

Based on the first Hadīth, this insignificant, most needy, and sinful servant by the name of Ashraf, addresses all those who have a claim over him whether it is a monetary claim - (the possibility of a monetary claim is very weak except in the case where I receive stamps which are to be used in replying to peoples’ letters but the writer does not provide his full address. I wait for some time, and then use the stamps as *luqtah* (lost, unclaimed items). But I make this intention: If the owner of the stamps does not consider my using them in this way to be permissible, he must take the stamps from me and I will hand them over to him. If there is any other claim which I do not remember, the person must present himself to have it fulfilled. In all cases, the prerequisite is that I must be convinced of the person’s honesty) – or a non-monetary claim, e.g. I may have wrongfully said something to someone – whether directly or in his absence, whether initiated by myself or I may have exceeded the bounds in retaliation, or I may have caused wrongful physical harm to someone. There is a strong possibility of such non-monetary claims.

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[1] مشكوة، باب ما ينهى عنه من التهاجر.

I submit myself in absolute humility and I plead to all of them to take the compensation of such rights from me – provided I am convinced of the claimant's honesty – or to pardon me for Allāh's ﷻ sake. I will be grateful to them in both instances for having saved me from accountability in the Hereafter. In the case where they pardon me, I will continue making *duʿā'* for them because they have shown additional kindness to me.

Based on the second Hadīth, I pardon everyone without any exception with regard to the non-monetary dues which they owe me (I made a similar announcement before this during the insurgency). As for monetary dues which are owed to me, I permit the one who does not have the means [to pay me back] to speak to me personally. *Inshā Allāh*, I will work out a solution, either by absolving him totally, writing off a certain amount of the debt, giving him respite, or something else.

Based on the third Hadīth, those who do not accept my pleas and appeals, I say to them for their own good: It is extremely dangerous to take upon one's self the warning which is issued for not accepting another's apology. To take upon one's self the sin of an unjust tax collector and deprive one's self of Rasūlullāh's ﷺ company at the Haud-e-Kauthar are most certainly not ordinary warnings. May Allāh ﷻ protect all of us from having such warnings applied to us. In addition to this, you have many dues which you owe to the creation and the Creator. If these are

not pardoned, what will your position be? If you pardon the dues which are owed to you, there is hope of having the dues which you owe pardoned. This was mentioned in the second Hadīth.

Based on the fourth Hadīth, there may be some people who did not pardon me for the dues which I owe them. Although they have been warned against this under the third Hadīth, I will join them in continually making *istighfār* for them because there is no other way out. May Allāh ﷻ accept this from me, make this deed an atonement for me, and may He accept my *istighfār* for those who have claims over me.

Based on the fifth Hadīth, I am investigating the issue for my self, and also on behalf of those whom I wronged, and those who wronged me. If I pardon a person for his mistake and accept his apology, it is not necessary that I maintain special friendship with him. In some cases, one is unable to do this, and in other cases, we have experienced that there is no expediency in it. But one thing is essential, if we meet coincidentally, we must offer *salām* to each other. If one were to engage in any essential conversation, the other should give an appropriate reply even if it is brief. If the conversation becomes more than necessary, and it could cause an informality, one should apologize in a soft manner.

In the commentary to the above Hadīth, the *Lamaʿāt* quotes the statement of Suyūtī *rahimahullāh* in his commentary to *al-Muwattā*:

بقوله ومن خاف من مكالمة أحد وصلته ما يفسد عليه دينه ويدخل مضرة في دنياه يجوز له مجانبته والبعد عنه ورب هجر جميل خير من مخالطة موذية.

"If a person feels his conversing with a certain person and maintaining contact with him would harm his *Dīnī* and worldly life, it is permissible for him to remain aloof from and distance himself from him. Many a separation in a good manner is better than an intermingling which is harmful."

If a person severs relations because of *Dīnī* reasons, he is excluded from the above-quoted Hadīth. This is clearly stated in the above-mentioned commentary:

من قوله المراد حرمة الهجران إلى قوله وأما ما كان من جهة الدين والمذهب فهجران أهل البدع والأهواء واجب إلى وقت ظهور التوبة.

"As for severing of relations which is based on Sharʿī grounds, e.g. severing ties with the *ahl-e-bidʿah* (those involved in innovations) and those who follow their whims and fancies, then it is *wājib* (obligatory) to sever ties with them until their repentance is obvious."

In short, those who have claims over me may forgive me for my past and future dues for as long as I am alive. Alternatively, they could collect an equitable compensation from me according to the Sharīʿah and Sharʿī principles, and forgive me after I pass away. I now present this theme concisely in a poem:

“Even if I beat someone or addressed him in an insulting manner, he must come today and exact revenge from me. He must not leave this for the day of Resurrection, because I do not want to be disgraced on the day of Resurrection, and I do not want to experience a situation where I have to express remorse before Allāh ﷻ.”

وهذا كأنه ترجمة لخطابه صلى الله عليه وسلم العام قرب وفاته ونصه قال عليه السلام أنه قد دنا مني خفوق بين أظهركم وإنما أنا بشر فأيما رجل كنت أصبت من عرضه شيئا فهذا عرضي فليقتص، وأيما رجل كنت أصبت من بشره شيئا فهذا بشري فليقتص، وأيما رجل كنت أصبت من ماله شيئا فهذا مالي فليأخذ واعلموا أن أولاكم بي رجل كان له من ذلك شيء فليأخذه أو حللني فلقيت ربي وأنا محلل بي ولا يقولن رجل إني أخاف العداوة والشحناء من رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم فإنهما ليستا من طبيعتي ولا من خلقي ومن غلبة نفس على شيء فليستعن لي حتى أدعو له.
(ابن سعد طب عن الفضل بن عباس)

“This is actually a translation of Rasūlullāh’s ﷺ general address which he delivered prior to his demise. It reads thus: Rasūlullāh ﷺ said: The time has drawn near when I will depart from your midst. I am merely a human. If I dishonoured any person, I present myself before him and he must take revenge from me. If I physically harmed any person, my body is present before him; he may take physical retribution from me. If I usurped any person’s wealth, my wealth is here; he may come and take what I owe him. The best of you in my sight is the one who has any claim against me and he comes and takes it back, or he may

absolve me, because I want to meet Allāh ﷻ while I have absolved myself from all claims against me. No person should say: 'I fear enmity and grudge from Rasūlullāh ﷺ', because this is neither my nature nor my character. Any person who is over-awed [in making his claim] must ask me for help and I will make *du'ā'* for him."

I conclude by requesting the reader to make *du'ā'* Allāh ﷻ absolves me of all dues and wrongs either by enabling me to fulfil them or absolving me of them; and to protect me against all types of accountability in the Hereafter. May Allāh ﷻ shower His mercy on the person who says *āmīn* to this.

Ashraf 'Alī
20th Ramadān 1344 A.H.
Thānabhawan, district Muzaffarnagar

Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* apologizes publicly in his last assembly of Mumbai

You are [probably] aware that Hadrat Muslihul Ummat Maulānā Shāh Wasīyyullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* spent a major portion of his latter life in Mumbai. While in Mumbai, he made the intention to go by ship to perform hajj in Sha'bān al-Mu'azzam 1387 A.H. People came in droves to meet him, and he continued conducting his assemblies (*majālis*). Eventually the day came which is described by Hadrat Maulānā 'Abd ar-Rahmān Jāmī *rahimahullāh* as follows:

“Today was the last day of the *majlis* because Hadrat was to depart tomorrow. There was a large crowd, many outside guests had arrived, and a large number of Mumbai residents were also present. Hadrat did not come out of his room today as well. He sent this message to the people through me:

He said: “I will probably not have an opportunity of addressing you tomorrow. So I am saying to you today: I stayed for many days among you people, and you visited me continually. When a person stays over at a particular place, certain rights and responsibilities become applicable. In the course of my stay here, I probably said something to you which hurt your feelings, or I may have done something which offended you. I apologize to you for it and ask you to pardon me. I certainly said certain harsh things, but this was solely with the purpose of rectification, out of affection for you, and desiring your well-being. Nonetheless, if I hurt anyone in any way, please pardon me.”

Note: Glory to Allāh! This shows how much of fear Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* had for the Hereafter. This is an excellent example for us. May Allāh ﷻ inspire us all to practise on it. Āmīn.

A *murīd* of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* acknowledges his mistake

The following story of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* is worth considering: A sincere

murīd committed a sin on account of which he stopped coming to Hadrat. Hadrat said to me on one occasion: "Go and ask Hājī Sāhib the reason for not attending." [When I asked him], he said: "I am a sinner and I do not have the courage to come before Hadrat. I am ashamed." I conveyed his reply to Hadrat who responded immediately: "Bhāi! Go tell him there is no harm in that. If the *murīd* is a sinner, the *pīr* (shaykh) is also a sinner. Why, then, should there be any reservation in coming?" The person began coming to Hadrat once again.

Note: Glory to Allāh! Look at the humble words which he uttered! This is certainly the good fortune of the *Ahlullāh* and reformers of this *ummah*.

Another incident of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh*

Some toilets were being constructed next to Hadrat's *khānqāh* in Fatahpūr Tālnarjā, district Mau. In the process of the construction, a person claimed that the land belonged to him. Hadrat ordered for the building to be broken down, and said: "We will investigate the matter and decide what to do." It was learnt that the land did not belong to the person who claimed it was his. And so, the toilets were built there.

Hadrat took the responsibility of paying the labourers every evening for whatever work they

did. If any of his associates faulted in these payments, he would take them to task.

This noble example must be borne in mind by all, especially those who are Hadrat's associates and *murīds*. They must pay particular attention to rectification, fear of Allāh ﷻ, and transparency in all their dealings. Unfortunately, even we – his associates – are not doing this. We seek refuge in Allāh ﷻ.

Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Ahmad Sāhib Partābgarhī's *rahimahullāh* apology

1. It was Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Ahmad Sāhib's *rahimahullāh* blessed habit to seek forgiveness for most trivial matters on the probability that the person may have been offended. A famous *ʿālim* relates his experiences when he went to Phulpūr in the periodical, *ar-Rashād*. In the course of his article, he describes this small village as *wādī-e-mahabbat* (the valley of love). While describing this journey, he makes mention of an *ʿālim* of the place who felt offended by him over a particular issue and expressed his displeasure at him. This *ʿālim* did not confine his displeasure to him [the famous *ʿalim* who is writing the article] alone, but also expressed his anger against Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Ahmad Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. Hadrat *rahimahullāh* was very much saddened by this and asked him for forgiveness in a most imploring tone.

2. A close associate of Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Ahmad Sāhib *rahimahullāh* made certain derogatory statements against Hadrat Maulānā Shāh Wasīyyullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* which caused much displeasure to the latter. When Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Ahmad Sāhib *rahimahullāh* learnt of this, he was most disappointed by the person and said to him: “Go to Maulānā’s residence in Fatahpūr Tālnarjā, district Mau, and ask him to pardon you. Only then will I accept that you really sought genuine pardon.” The person went and asked him for pardon as instructed. Hadrat Maulānā Shāh Wasīyyullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* was very much pleased and said with regard to Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Ahmad Sāhib *rahimahullāh*: “Such were the qualities of the *buzurgs* of the past.”

Similarly, Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Ahmad Sāhib *rahimahullāh* said with regard to Hadrat Muslihul Ummat Maulānā Shāh Wasīyyullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh*: “In today’s times, Hadrat Maulānā Shāh Wasīyyullāh Sāhib’s example is like that of Sayyidunā ʿAbd al-Qādir Jīlānī *rahimahullāh*.”

Rasūlullāh ﷺ is ordered to consult the Sahābah ؓ

In the battle of Uhud,[1] the Muslims suffered a [temporary] defeat because of a misunderstanding on the part of the Sahābah ؓ. Rasūlullāh ﷺ was severely vexed by this, but Allāh ﷻ instructed him to pardon the Sahābah ؓ, seek forgiveness for them, and to consult them on important issues. This was certainly Allāh's ﷻ way of teaching and tutoring Rasūlullāh ﷺ because just as Allāh ﷻ is all-pardoning and all-forgiving, He instructed His Messenger ﷺ to do the same so that he may have the honour of imbibing Allāh's character (*mutakhalliq bi akhlāqillāh*).

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[1] My dear son, Maulwī Mahbūb Ahmad Qamar az-Zamān Nadwī, delivers a talk of about fifteen minutes every Friday before the *jumuʿah khutbah* in Jāmiʿ Musjid Qamar Dār al-Maʿārif al-Islāmīyyah, Karelī, Ilāhābād. The people enjoy his talks and are impressed by them. He delivered an inspiring talk on 7 Safar 1429 A.H. on the subject of the battle of Uhud. He stated therein that Rasūlullāh ﷺ had to experience the sad incident of his beloved uncle's – Hadrat Hamzah ؓ - martyrdom who was killed in a mutilating way by the unbelievers. This caused much pain and grief to Rasūlullāh ﷺ, but Allāh ﷻ desired to impart a special training to Rasūlullāh ﷺ by instructing him to pardon the Sahābah ؓ for their error and lapse. I was very impressed by this theme as explained by my beloved son, and I am therefore making the relevant verses, their translation and their commentary a part of this book, *Iʿtirāf-e-Qusūr*. May Allāh ﷻ bestow us with patience, forbearance, pardon, and reliance (*tawakkul*) on such occasions. May Allāh ﷻ inspire by beloved son to continue delivering such inspiring talks, and may He accept him. Āmīn.

I now quote the verses in which Allāh ﷻ instructs Rasūlullāh ﷺ to pardon and forgive.

فَبِمَا رَحْمَةٍ مِّنَ اللهِ لِنْتَ لَهُمْ ج وَلَوْ كُنْتَ فَظًّا غَلِيْظَ الْقَلْبِ لاَنْفَضُّوْا مِنْ حَوْلِكَ ص فَاعْفُ عَنْهُمْ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ وَشَاوِرْهُمْ فِي الأَمْرِ ج فَإِذَا عَزَمْتَ فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللهِ ط إِنَّ اللهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَوَكِّلِيْنَ.

"It is the mercy of Allāh alone that they found you to be soft-hearted. Had you been harsh, hard-hearted, they would have dispersed from around you. So pardon them and seek forgiveness for them and take counsel from them in all matters. Once you have decided over the matter, place your trust in Allāh. Allāh loves those who place their trust in Him." (Sūrah Āl 'Imrān, 3: 159)

With regard to the correlation of the above verse with the one which is before it, Hadrat Hakīm al-Ummat Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* writes:

Allāh ﷻ first conveys the good news of pardon:

وَلَقَدْ عَفَا اللهُ عَنْهُمْ إِنَّ اللهَ غَفُوْرٌ حَلِيْمٌ

"Allāh certainly pardoned them. Surely Allāh is forgiving, forbearing."

Allāh ﷻ then orders Rasūlullāh ﷺ to do certain things through which the above objective [of pardoning] may be realized.

The commentary to these verses is quoted from *Bayān al-Qur’ān*:

Rasūlullāh ﷺ is ordered to pardon the S̲ah̲ābah رضي الله عنهم

Those Companions [who were appointed to guard the mountain pass] committed a mistake which gave Rasūlullāh ﷺ the right to reprimand them. By virtue of Allāh’s mercy [which is showered on you], you remained soft and lenient towards them. [Rasūlullāh’s ﷺ soft nature is referred to as the cause of mercy because good character is an act of worship, and the inspiration to worship is through Allāh’s mercy]. And if you [Allāh forbid] had been harsh, hard-hearted, these [poor people] would have dispersed from around you. [How, then, would they have obtained these bestowals and blessings?]. So [now that you acted so leniently towards them for their own benefit], you must pardon [with your heart as well, the shortcoming which they displayed in carrying out your order]. As for [whatever shortcoming they displayed in carrying out Allāh’s orders], you must seek forgiveness [from Allāh سبحانه وتعالى] for them. [Although Allāh سبحانه وتعالى has pardoned them, your seeking forgiveness for them will be an indication of additional kindness and affection for them, and this will console them even more]. [You must continue] taking counsel from them on special issues [so that they are pleased even further]. Then [after you take their counsel], when you make a firm resolution [towards a particular decision, whether it is in line with their counsel

or not], you must place your trust in Allāh ﷻ [and follow the course of action which you decided on]. Surely Allāh ﷻ loves those who place their trust [in Allāh ﷻ].” (*Bayān al-Qur’ān*)

Hadrat Maulānā Idrīs Sāhib Kāndhlawī *rahimahullāh* explains these verses as follows in his commentary, *Maʿāriful Qur’ān*:

فَبِمَا رَحْمَةٍ مِّنَ اللهِ لِنْتَ لَهُمْ ج وَلَوْ كُنْتَ فَظًّا غَلِيْظَ الْقَلْبِ لاَنْفَضُّوْا مِنْ حَوْلِكَ ص فَاعْفُ عَنْهُمْ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ وَشَاوِرْهُمْ فِي الأَمْرِ ج فَإِذَا عَزَمْتَ فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللهِ ط إِنَّ اللهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَوَكِّلِيْنَ. إِنْ يَّنْصُرْكُمُ اللهُ فَلاَ غَالِبَ لَكُمْ ج وَإِنْ يَّخْذُلْكُمْ فَمَنْ ذَا الَّذِيْ يَنْصُرُكُمْ مِنْۢ بَعْدِهِ ط وَعَلَى اللهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ.

“It is the mercy of Allāh alone that they found you to be soft-hearted. Had you been harsh, hard-hearted, they would have dispersed from around you. So pardon them and seek forgiveness for them and take counsel from them in all matters. Once you have decided over the matter, place your trust in Allāh. Allāh loves those who place their trust in Him. If Allāh helps you, no one will be able to overcome you. And if He does not help you, who is there that can help you after Him? And it is in Allāh alone that the Muslims should place their trust.” (Sūrah Āl ʿImrān, 3: 159-160)

Rasūlullāh ﷺ was quite displeased by the error of some Sahābah ؓ in the battle of Uhud. And so, there was a possibility he might reprimand them and desist from taking their counsel in future. Allāh ﷻ interceded on behalf of the Sahābah ؓ,

instructing Rasūlullāh ﷺ to pardon their mistakes, to continue seeking their advice, and to treat them with kindness and affection. Consequently, on his return from Uhud, Rasūlullāh ﷺ treated them with genuine compassion and did not reprimand them for their error. These verses were revealed in connection with this incident.

Despite this mistake and acting against Rasūlullāh's ﷺ orders, Rasūlullāh ﷺ became soft towards them by virtue of Allāh's mercy, and did not reprimand them. If – Allāh forbid – Rasūlullāh ﷺ was harsh and hard-hearted, these people would have dispersed from him and remained aloof from him. This is because no matter how many merits and excellences a harsh and hard-hearted person may possess, people will not be attracted to him. In such a situation, they will be deprived of Rasūlullāh's ﷺ guidance and words of advice, they will not accept his *daʿwah*, and Rasūlullāh's ﷺ reward itself will be decreased because he will now have a fewer number of followers.

You [Rasūlullāh ﷺ] should therefore pardon them for not carrying out your orders, and do not take them to task. As for their shortcoming in not carrying out Allāh's orders, you must make *duʿā'* for their forgiveness so that Allāh ﷾ pardons them their mistakes. Furthermore, you must continue seeking their counsel in matters where Allāh ﷾ did not send down any explicit directives. These broken-hearted people will be consoled through

this affection and attention which you show to them, and they will feel that you are pleased with them.

Mere pardon does not convince and satisfy a person until he is treated with affection and kindness. Once you [Rasūlullāh ﷺ] decide on a matter after consulting them and come to a firm decision, you must place your trust in Allāh سبحانه وتعالى and not on the consultation. Do not rely on your plan and course of action. Instead, focus your sight on Allāh's help and assistance. Surely Allāh سبحانه وتعالى loves those who place their trust in Him.

Although the Sahābah رضي الله عنهم are considered to be intelligent people and are undoubtedly worthy of counsel, reliance and trust must be placed in Allāh سبحانه وتعالى, and not on those who are intelligent. If Allāh سبحانه وتعالى helps you, there is none to overpower you. If Allāh سبحانه وتعالى were to abandon you, who is there who can come to your assistance? Believers must place their trust in Allāh سبحانه وتعالى, and not on the advice and plans of the intelligent. After all, intelligence and the intelligent are all under His control. This is the essential teaching of Islam: Do not abandon the means, resort to them; but do not consider any of the means to be the real cause. Believe in the all-powerful [Allāh سبحانه وتعالى] as the real cause, place your trust in Him, and believe the means to be no more than means. (Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Idrīs Kāndhlawī, *Maʿāriful Qur'ān*, vol. 1, p. 567)

Note: We ought to be kind and compassionate to people in general. However, the *ʿulamā'* and

mashā’ikh have to be very particular in adhering to this instruction so that they do not become causes of keeping those who are seeking guidance further away. Admonition and strictness are permissible in certain necessary situations for the sake of rectification, but these must be adopted with insight. Apart from that, kindness and leniency must be the norm because there is abundant and general benefit in it.

It is essential for any person engaged in reformation and *Dīnī* activities to adopt the teachings of Allāh ﷿ and Sunnah of Rasūlullāh ﷺ with sincerity and devotion.

In these verses, Allāh ﷿ explicitly ordered Rasūlullāh ﷺ to be pardoning and forgiving. This is why he displayed an open and explicit pardoning and forgiving approach on the occasion of the Conquest of Makkah. Such an approach was never witnessed before. One ought to study this incident.

Rasūlullāh ﷺ proclaims a general pardon on the Conquest of Makkah

Hadrat Maulānā Sayyid Abul Hasan ‘Alī Miyā Nadwī *rahimahullāh* writes in *Nabī-e-Rahmat* in this regard:

On the occasion of the Conquest of Makkah, Rasūlullāh’s ﷺ cousin, Abū Sufyān (Ibn al-Hārith ibn ‘Abd al-Muttalib), met him but Rasūlullāh ﷺ turned his face away from him because he had

really tormented Rasūlullāh ﷺ and made disparaging remarks about him. Abū Sufyān went to Hadrat ʽAlī ؓ and complained about Rasūlullāh ﷺ averting him. Hadrat ʽAlī ؓ said: “Go before Rasūlullāh ﷺ and say these words which Hadrat Yūsuf’s ؑ brothers had said to Hadrat Yūsuf ؑ:

قَالُوْا تَاللهِ لَقَدْ آثَرَكَ اللهُ عَلَيْنَا وَإِنْ كُنَّا لَخَاطِئِيْنَ

“They said: ‘By Allāh! Allāh has indeed chosen you above us, and we were certainly in error.’” (Sūrah Yūsuf, 12: 91)

This is because Rasūlullāh ﷺ does not like anyone to surpass him in soft and compassionate words. Abū Sufyān followed Hadrat ʽAlī’s ؓ advice, and read the above verse before Rasūlullāh ﷺ. Rasūlullāh ﷺ said:

لاَ تَثْرِيْبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْيَوْمَ يَغْفِرُ اللهُ لَكُمْ وَهُوَ أَرْحَمُ الرَّاحِمِيْنَ

“There is no reproach on you this day. May Allāh forgive you. And He is the most merciful of those who show mercy.” (Sūrah Yūsuf, 12: 92)

After this, Abū Sufyān was included among the excellent and resolute Muslims. However, after embracing Islam, he was too ashamed to look at Rasūlullāh ﷺ full in the eye. (*Nabī-e-Rahmat*, p. 448)

The same incident is related by Hadrat Maulānā Shiblī Nu‘mānī *rahimahullāh* in his famous book, *Sīratun Nabī*:

The greatest favour which Islam rendered on the Conquest of Makkah was the establishment of equality. In other words, Arabs, non-Arabs, the noble, the ignoble, the kings and the slaves are all equal. Each person can progress and reach the highest levels. Rasūlullāh ﷺ read the Qur’ānic verses in this regard and said: “You are all from Ādam, and Ādam was created from soil.”

When Rasūlullāh ﷺ looked at the assembly after his sermon, he saw the Quraysh tyrants before him. There were those who used to utter obscenities against him, those who used to make disparaging remarks to him, those who used to scatter thorns in his path, those who caused his feet to get filled with blood when he used to deliver his talks, those whose disparaging remarks could be extinguished by the blood of prophet-hood and nothing else, those whose attacks would strike against the walls of Madīnah, and those who used to place Muslims in the hot burning sand and brand their chests with burning steels.

The Mercy to the worlds ﷺ looked at all of them and asked them in a terrifying tone: “Do you know what I am going to do to you?”

Although these people were tyrants, wretched, and merciless; they were fully aware of Rasūlullāh’s ﷺ temperament. They said:

أخ كريم وابن كريم

“You are a noble brother, and the son of a nobleman.”

Rasūlullāh ﷺ said:

لا تثريب عليكم اليوم، إذهبوا وأنتم الطلقاء

“There is no reproach on you this day. Go, you are free.”

The unbelievers of Makkah had taken possession of the houses of all the Muhājirūn (Emigrants). It was the time to give back their dues, but Rasūlullāh ﷺ instructed the Muhājirūn to give up their possessions. (*Sīratun Nabī*, vol. 1, p. 370)

Hadrat Yūsuf عليه السلام pardons his brothers

Hadrat Yūsuf عليه السلام said:

اَنَا يُوْسُفُ وَهٰذَآ اَخِيْ ز قَدْ مَنَّ اللّٰهُ عَلَيْنَا ط اِنَّهُ مَنْ يَّتَّقِ وَيَصْبِرْ فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ لاَ يُضِيْعُ اَجْرَ الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ.

“I am Yūsuf, and this is my brother. Allāh has been kind to us. Surely whoever is fearful and patient, Allāh does not destroy the reward of the righteous.” (Sūrah Yūsuf, 12: 90)

What else could Hadrat Yūsuf's ﵇ brothers do apart from express remorse, shame, and acknowledge their error and crime? All the scenes of their plotting for Hadrat Yūsuf's ﵇ destruction came before them, and when the fact dawned upon them that the person whom they had cast into the well of Kanʿān was today not just the ʿAzīz of Egypt, but its highest leader, they all submitted before their half-brother and said:

قَالُوْا تَاللّٰهِ لَقَدْ آثَرَكَ اللّٰهُ عَلَيْنَا وَإِنْ كُنَّا لَخٰطِئِيْنَ.

They said: "By Allāh! Allāh has indeed chosen you above us, and we were certainly in error." (Sūrah Yūsuf, 12: 91)

When Hadrat Yūsuf ﵇ saw their poverty-stricken condition and remorse, his noble character and prophetic mercy and compassion could bear it not longer, and he made the following statement which is filled with pardon, forbearance and kindness:

لاَ تَثْرِيْبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْيَوْمَ يَغْفِرُ اللّٰهُ لَكُمْ وَهُوَ أَرْحَمُ الرَّاحِمِيْنَ.

"There is no reproach on you this day. May Allāh forgive you. And He is the most merciful of those who show mercy." (Sūrah Yūsuf, 12: 92)

Whatever was to happen has happened, we ought to forget this entire episode. I am beseeching Allāh ﷿ to pardon you for this error because He

alone is the most merciful and compassionate of all. (*Qi*s*a*s *al-Qur'ān*, vol. 1, p. 330)

Incidents of Rasūlullāh's ﷺ pardon

1. Hibār ibn al-Aswad was to a certain extent responsible for the murder of Rasūlullāh's ﷺ daughter, Hadrat Zaynab *radiyallāhu ʿanhā*, and had committed various other crimes. On the occasion of the Conquest of Makkah, he ought to have been killed in retaliation, and he wanted to flee to Iran. But he thought about his situation, proceeded directly to Rasūlullāh ﷺ and said: "O Rasūlullāh! I wanted to flee to Iran, but then I thought of your mercy, kindness, pardon, and forbearance; and presented myself to you. All the information you received about my crimes is correct." No sooner Rasūlullāh ﷺ heard this, his doors of mercy opened and there remained no distinction between enemy and friend.

2. After the battle of Badr, ʿUmayr ibn Wahb is influenced by a conspiracy of a Qurayshī leader. He dips his sword in poison and proceeds to Madīnah. He lies in wait to find the ideal opportunity to put an end to Rasūlullāh's ﷺ life. But he is suddenly apprehended and brought before Rasūlullāh ﷺ. His crime is proven but he is released.

3. Rasūlullāh ﷺ goes to Khaybar, the fortified centre of the Jews. Battles ensue and the town is conquered. A Jewess invites him to a meal and Rasūlullāh ﷺ accepts it without hesitation. The

Jewess offers him meat which is poisoned. Rasūlullāh ﷺ places a piece of the meat in his mouth and he is informed [by Jibra'īl عليه السلام] about it. The Jewess is summoned, and she admits her plot. But the Mercy to the Worlds ﷺ does not punish her although he perceived the effects of the poison for the rest of his life.

4. On his return from the expedition to Najd, Rasūlullāh ﷺ was resting beneath a tree in the afternoon with his sword suspended on a branch of the tree. The Sahābah رضي الله عنهم were scattered, lying down in the shade of trees. There was no one near Rasūlullāh ﷺ. A Bedouin was lying in wait for him and he suddenly dashes towards Rasūlullāh ﷺ. He removes Rasūlullāh's ﷺ sword from the branch, unsheathes it, and Rasūlullāh's ﷺ eyes open. He points the sword at Rasūlullāh ﷺ and threatens: "Muhammad! Who can save you from me?" Rasūlullāh ﷺ replies with absolute calm: "Allāh." On hearing this unexpected reply, the Bedouin feels threatened, returns the sword into its sheath, the Sahābah رضي الله عنهم rush towards them, the Bedouin sits down, and Rasūlullāh ﷺ does not do anything to the Bedouin.

5. An unbeliever who was lying in wait to kill Rasūlullāh ﷺ is captured and brought before him. He starts trembling when he sees Rasūlullāh ﷺ. Rasūlullāh ﷺ consoles him and says: "Even if you wanted to kill me, you would not have been able to do it."

On the occasion of the Conquest of Makkah, the same group of people which had tried to kill Rasūlullāh ﷺ from Mt. Tanʿīm was captured. When Rasūlullāh ﷺ was informed of their capture, he said: "Release them." (Muftī Maulānā Muhammad Sāhib Pālanpūrī, *Akmal wa Ashraf Muhammad ʿArabī* ﷺ)

Hadrat ʿAlī ibn Husayn ibn ʿAlī's pardon

Hadrat ʿAlī ibn Husayn ibn ʿAlī ibn Abī Tālib [the grandson of Hadrat ʿAlī ؓ] had a slave woman who was pouring water for him while he was performing *wudū'* (ablution). The jug of water slipped from her hand and fell on his face. His face was injured by the jug. He lifted his head and looked at the slave woman. She immediately read the verse:

وَالْكَاظِمِيْنَ الْغَيْظَ

"Those who suppress their anger."

He said to her: "I have suppressed my anger." She read the verse:

وَالْعَافِيْنَ عَنِ النَّاسِ

"Those who pardon people."

He said: "I have pardoned you, may Allāh ﷻ pardon you as well." She read the verse:

وَاللّٰهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ

“Allāh loves those who do good.”

He said to her: “You may go, you are free from today.” (*Hidāyatul Mustarshidīn*)

Hadrat Maymūn ibn Mihrān's ﷛ pardon

Hadrat Maymūn ibn Mihrān ﷛ had a few guests. His slave girl was bringing some hot gravy in a utensil. She slipped and the gravy fell on Hadrat Maymun's ﷛ head. He wanted to punish her so she said: “O my master! Practise on Allāh's command:

وَالْكَاظِمِيْنَ الْغَيْظَ

“Those who suppress their anger.”

He said to her: “I am practising on it and have suppressed my anger.” She said: “Practise on the next order as well:

وَالْعَافِيْنَ عَنِ النَّاسِ

“Those who pardon people.”

He said: “I have pardoned you.” She read the next part of the verse:

وَاللّٰهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ

"Allāh loves those who do good."

He said: "I am doing good to you for Allāh's pleasure. You are now free. You may take these 1000 dirhams as well."

Here was a person who had the power to punish, yet he pardoned her. This is the highest example of forbearance, pardon and kindness.

A mother is advised not to add water to milk

During his caliphate, Hadrat ʿUmar ؓ issued an order prohibiting anyone from adding water to milk. He went out on patrol one night on the outskirts of Madīnah. He heard a woman saying to her daughter: "Why have you not added water to the milk as yet? Dawn is approaching." Her daughter said: "How can I add water to the milk when the Amīr al-Mu'minīn has prohibited us from doing this?" The old woman said: "Others are doing it, why should we not do it? What does the Amīr al-Mu'minīn know?" The daughter said: "If ʿUmar does not know, the Lord of ʿUmar knows. If he has prohibited us from doing this, I cannot do it."

Hadrat ʿUmar ؓ was most impressed by the girl's speech. The next morning he called for his son, ʿĀsim, related the incident to him, and said: "Go and find out who she is?" Upon inquiry, he learnt that she is from the Banī Hilāl tribe. He returned to Hadrat ʿUmar ؓ and informed him. So he said

to ʿĀsim: "O son! Go and marry her. She is worthy of giving birth to a leader who will rule over all the Arabs." ʿĀsim married her, and she gave birth to Umm ʿĀsim bint ʿĀsim ibn ʿUmar ibn al-Khattāb. Umm ʿĀsim got married to ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz ibn Marwān ibn al-Hakam. From this marriage, they gave birth to Hadrat ʿUmar ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz – may Allāh be pleased with all of them. (*Sīrat ʿUmar ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz*, p. 13)

Note: Look at Hadrat ʿUmar Fārūq's ﷺ insightful *īmān*. From just one conversation of the girl, he was able to gauge that she will turn out to be a very pious woman. This is why he instructed his son, Hadrat ʿĀsim, to marry her. We also learn of Hadrat ʿUmar's ﷺ appreciation and value of *Dīn* and religiousness. He did not look for anything apart from religiousness for marriage. This was in absolute conformity with Rasūlullāh's ﷺ teaching. May Allāh ﷻ reward them all with the best of rewards.

Hadrat Jibra'īl ﷺ advises Rasūlullāh ﷺ to choose humility and servitude

عن عائشة قالت: قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: يا عائشة لو شئت لسارت معي جبال الذهب، جاءني ملك وإن حجزته لتساوي الكعبة، فقال إن ربك يقرأ عليك السلام ويقول إن شئت نبيا عبدا وإن شئت نبيا ملكا، فنظرت إلى جبرئيل علي السلام فأشار إلي أن ضع نفسك، في رواية ابن عباس فالتفت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم إلى جبرئيل كالمستشير له فأشار جيرئيل بيده أن تواضع فقلت نبيا عبدا، قالت فكان رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم بعد ذلك لا يأكل متكئا يقول

آكل كما يأكل العبد وأجلس كما يجلس العبد. رواه في شرح السنة. (مشكوة شريف، ج٢، ص٥٢١).

Hadrat ʿĀ'ishah *radiyallāhu ʿanhā* narrates: Rasūlullāh ﷺ said to me: O ʿĀ'ishah! If I wish [to have the treasures of this world], mountains of gold would move with me. An angel whose hips were as wide as the Kaʿbah came to me one day and said: 'Your Lord conveys *salām* to you and says: 'If you wish, you can be a Prophet who is a servant, or you could be a Prophet who is a king.' [That is, you have a choice of becoming a Prophet who lives a life of poverty, difficulty, and hardship, or a Prophet who lives a life of opulence, luxury, comfort, and royal splendour]. I looked at Jibra'īl [in an effort to get his advice] and he said: 'Lower yourself [in servitude].' A narration of Ibn ʿAbbās ﷺ states: Rasūlullāh ﷺ turned towards Jibra'īl ﷺ to get his advice, and he pointed with his hand [to the ground] indicating to him to lower himself in humility. 'So I said: 'I will be a Prophet who is a servant.' ʿĀ'ishah *radiyallāhu ʿanhā* says: 'Ever since that day, Rasūlullāh ﷺ would never eat while leaning against anything. He would say: 'I eat as a slave and sit like a slave.'" (Narrated by Baghawī in *Sharh as-Sunnah*)

Commentary: The meaning of Hadrat Jibra'īl's ﷺ advice for Rasūlullāh ﷺ to lower himself is that he must choose a life of poverty, difficulty, and hardship. Although it may be materially low, it is of high value in Allāh's ﷻ sight. On the other

hand, kingship and a life of affluence are causes of rebellion, rejection of Allāh ﷾, pride and ingratitude. When man opts for such a life, he becomes distant from Allāh ﷾ and His pleasure. H̲ad̲rat Jibra'īl ﵇ gave Rasūlullāh ﷺ this advice on the basis of what happens in the majority of cases. This is why the majority of Prophets ﵇ and righteous people opted for a life of poverty and hardship. They always gave preference to a life of hardship and difficulty over a life of wealth, riches, opulence and comfort. O Allāh! Include us among them and resurrect us with them. Āmīn. (*Maz̲āhir-e-H̲aqq Jadīd*, vol. 6, p. 668)

The author of *Mirqāt*, Mullā 'Alī Qārī *rah̲imahullāh*, writes the following in his explanation to the above H̲adīth:

واختر أن تكون في مقام العبودية فإنه في المآل أعلى وفي المنازل أعلى وفي ذوق الطالبين أحلى، فإن الملك لله الواحد القهار، وقد قال تعالى: "وما خلقت الجن والإنس إلا ليعبدون." (الذاريات) أي لتظهر عبوديتهم لي وألوهيتي وربوبيتي لهم. (مرقاة، ج١٠، ص٥٠٠)

(H̲ad̲rat Jibra'īl ﵇ advised Rasūlullāh ﷺ saying): choose to remain in a position of servitude because it is the highest in the Hereafter, the highest of levels, and the sweetest according to the seekers. Surely kingdom belongs to Allāh ﷾ alone, the all-powerful. Allāh ﷾ says: 'I created jinn and man solely for My worship.' In other words, so that their servitude may be displayed to

Me, and My divinity and Lordship may be manifest to them."

In short, together with being a Prophet, Rasūlullāh ﷺ opted to be a servant and slave [of Allāh ﷻ]. Rasūlullāh ﷺ used to constantly demonstrate and acknowledge this:

أَللّٰهُمَّ إِنِّيْ عَبْدُكَ وَابْنُ عَبْدِكَ وَابْنُ أَمَتِكَ، نَاصِيَتِيْ بِيَدِكَ، مَاضٍ فِيَّ حُكْمُكَ، عَدْلٌ فِيَّ قَضَاؤُكَ.

"O Allāh! I am Your servant, the son of Your servant, and the son of Your female servant. I am completely under Your control. Your order concerning me is executed. Your judgement concerning me is absolutely just."

Note: Glory to Allāh! What an expression of servitude and self-effacement. This could have been said by none other than a perfect servant and slave like Rasūlullāh ﷺ. Moreover, Rasūlullāh ﷺ used to constantly make *duʿā'* for poverty, to live with the poor, and be resurrected with them:

أَللّٰهُمَّ أَحْيِنِيْ مِسْكِيْنًا وَّأَمِتْنِيْ مِسْكِيْنًا وَّاحْشُرْنِيْ فِيْ زُمْرَةِ الْمَسَاكِيْنَ.

"O Allāh! Let me live a poor person, let me die a poor person, and raise me among the group of poor people."

Hadrat al-ʿAllāmah ʿAbd al-Wahhab *rahimahullāh* states: "By way of exposition, I can gauge the loftiness of Rasūlullāh's ﷺ prophet-hood, but I

cannot estimate the level of his servitude and humility [it is beyond estimation].”

Glory to Allāh! What a true statement he made. It ought to be cast in gold.

Rasūlullāh’s ﷺ extreme self-effacement

Rasūlullāh ﷺ would make this *du‘ā’* very often:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنَّ قُلُوْبَنَا وَنَوَاصِيَنَا وَجَوَارِحَنَا بِيَدِكَ، لَمْ تُمَلِّكْنَا مِنْهَا شَيْئًا، فَاِذَا فَعَلْتَ ذٰلِكَ بِنَا، فَكُنْ اَنْتَ وَلِيَّنَا وَاهْدِنَا اِلٰى سَوَآءِ السَّبِيْلِ.

“O Allāh! Our hearts, our entire being, and our limbs are in Your hands. You have not given us total control over any of these things. Since You have done this to us, You alone should remain our helper, and guide us to the straight path.”

Note: In explaining the above, Hadrat Muslihul Ummat Maulānā Shāh Wasīyyullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* used to say: “Is there any Sufi who displayed such self-effacement where he does not even consider his own hands and legs to be his property!? Instead, he considers them to be in Allāh’s ﷻ ownership.

How can it be possible for Rasūlullāh ﷺ not to have self-effacement and the latter people to have it? Rasūlullāh ﷺ was also the leader of people in the rank of self-effacement. Had this quality not been found in Rasūlullāh ﷺ, it would have been a *bid‘ah* and an innovation for the latter people.

Hadrat writes in *Maʿrifat-e-Ilāhīyyah* under the heading, Rasūlullāh's ﷺ servitude: Rasūlullāh ﷺ used to spend the nights reading the Qur'ān in salāh for lengthy periods to the extent that his feet would get swollen. Despite this, he would say:

ما عبدناك حق عبادتك

"O Allāh! I could not worship You as demanded by Your greatness." (*Maʿrifat-e-Ilāhīyyah*, p. 369)

Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Yūsuf Ludhyānwī Shahīd *rahimahullāh* writes in his book, *Maqālāt wa Shadharāt*:

The Qur'ān describes Rasūlullāh's ﷺ servitude

While relating the incident of Rasūlullāh's ﷺ *isrā'* (night journey to Bayt al-Maqdis), the Qur'ān describes him as Allāh's special servant.

This makes reference to the fact that the basis for Rasūlullāh's ﷺ lofty level and rank is his perfect servitude. This is how Allāh ﷻ treats His servants: the more servitude and humility a servant displays, the higher the level Allāh ﷻ bestows him with. The more a person displays his greatness and vexes his pride, the more Allāh ﷻ humiliates and derides him. A Hadīth states:

من تواضع لله رفعه الله

"Allāh ﷻ elevates the one who humbles himself for Allāh's sake." (*Kanz al-ʿUmmāl*, vol. 4, p. 112)

This shows that humility is the greatest of all human excellences and merits, and pride is the worst of all human defects. (*Maqālāt wa Shadharāt*, p. 15)

H̱aḏrat Abū Bakr's ؓ fear

H̱aḏrat Abū Bakr ؓ used to say: "If only I was a tree which is chopped and eaten." He used to hold his tongue and say: "This conveyed me towards instances of destruction." (*Aqwāl-e-Salaf*, vol. 1, p. 52)

H̱aḏrat ʿUmar's ؓ self-effacement

He used to say: "If only I was a sheep which people could rear as they wished, slaughtered and eaten me, and then got rid off me as excreta. I wish I was not created a human."

When he used to pass by rubbish heaps, he would stop and say: "This is your world after which you are hankering." (*Aqwāl-e-Salaf*, vol. 1, p. 55)

<u>H</u>a<u>d</u>rat ʿĀ'ishah's *ra<u>d</u>iyallāhu ʿanhā* self-effacement

عن ابن أبي مليكة قال استأذن ابن عباس قبل موتها على عائشة وهي مغلوبة، قالت أخشى أن يثنى عليّ، فقيل ابن عم رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم ومن وجوه المسلمين، قالت ائذنوا له فقال: كيف تجدينك، قالت: بخير إن اتقيت، قال فأنت بخير إن شاء الله زوجة رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم ولم ينكح بكرا غيرك ونزل عذرك من السماء، ودخل ابن الزبير خلافه فقالت دخل ابن عباس فأثنى علي ووددت أني كنت نسيا منسيا. (رواه البخاري)

Ibn Abī Mulaykah narrates: Shortly before <u>H</u>a<u>d</u>rat ʿĀ'ishah *ra<u>d</u>iyallāhu ʿanhā* could pass away – and she was in the throes of death – Ibn ʿAbbās sought permission to visit her. She said: "I fear he might start praising me." Someone said: "He is Rasūlullāh's ﷺ cousin and a senior person [you ought to permit him]." She said: "Allow him to come in." <u>H</u>a<u>d</u>rat Ibn ʿAbbās ﵁ asked her: "How are you?" She replied: "I am okay provided I am fearful [of Allāh ﷻ]. [In other words, if I am good in Allāh's sight, then everything is okay]. Ibn ʿAbbās ﵁ said: "*Inshā Allāh*, you will be okay [your death will be a good death] after all you are the wife of Rasūlullāh ﷺ, he did not marry any virgin apart from you, and your innocence was sent down from the heavens [in the Qur'ān]." After he departed, Ibn az-Zubayr ﵁ went to visit her. She said: "Ibn ʿAbbās came to visit me just now and he spoke in praise of me. I wish I was completely forgotten." (*Bukhārī*)

عن هشام عن أبيه عن عائشة رضي الله تعالى عنها أنها أوصت عبد الله بن الزبير لا تدفني معهم وادفني مع صواحبي بالبقيع لا أزكّى به أبدا. (بخاري، ج١، ص١٨٦).

Hadrat Hishām narrates from his father who said: ʿĀ'ishah *radiyallāhu ʿanhā* made a bequest to ʿAbdullāh ibn az-Zubayr ﵁ saying: "Do not bury me with them [i.e. Rasūlullāh ﷺ, Abū Bakr ﵁ and ʿUmar ﵁]. Bury me in Baqīʿ with my co-wives. I do not want to be praised together with Rasūlullāh ﷺ."

We learn from this that Hadrat ʿĀ'ishah's *radiyallāhu ʿanhā* statement was made out of absolute humility and self-effacement, as stated in *Fath al-Bārī*:

لا أزكىّ بضم أوله وفتح الكاف على البناء للمجهول، أي لا يثنى على بسببه ويجعل لي بذلك مزية وفضل وأنا في نفس الأمر يحتمل أن لا أكون كذلك، وهذا منها على سبيل التواضع وهضم النفس.

"Hadrat ʿĀ'ishah *radiyallāhu ʿanhā* says: I do not want myself to be praised because of him, and to acquire any special merit because of him, when I am not worthy of it. She said this out of humility and self-effacement."

Note: I consider this to be the *fanā* (self-effacement and self-obliteration) which the Sufis speak of. I can say with absolute certainty: Just as Umm al-Mu'minīn Hadrat ʿĀ'ishah *radiyallāhu ʿanhā* was a great scholar and jurist, she was also a remarkable Sufi. She remained in Rasūlullāh's

ﷺ company and traversed the ranks of *sulūk*, and fathomed the secrets and mysteries of the Tarīqah. Many fortunate women emulated her, acquired the love and recognition of Allāh ﷻ, and were honoured with *nisbat* (close affinity with Allāh ﷻ).

Hadrat al-ʿAllāmah ʿAbd ar-Rahmān Jāmī *rahimahullāh* makes specific reference to many erudite women in his well-known book, *Nafahāt al-Uns*. This insignificant servant [Muhammad Qamar az-Zamān] mentioned several female *auliyā'* of Allāh ﷻ in the first volume of his book, *Aqwāl-e-Salaf*. Their stories are filled with admonition for us.

I have one more thing to say about Umm al-Mu'minīn Hadrat ʿĀ'ishah *radiyallāhu ʿanhā*: Just as Hadrat Abū Bakr Siddīq ؓ is the source of all the Sufi lineages, Hadrat ʿĀ'ishah *radiyallāhu ʿanhā* also enjoys a lofty position in the Tarīqah. All praise is due to Allāh ﷻ.

Stories and statements of humility and self-effacement from the lives of our pious elders

My heart desires to quote some stories and statements of humility and servitude from *ad-Durr al-Mandūd*. This book is a translation of ʿAllāmah ʿAbd al-Wahhāb Shiʿrānī's *rahimahullāh* book, *al-Bahr al-Maurūd*. It was translated under the instruction of Hadrat Hakīm al-Ummat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* by

Hadrat Muhaddith-e-Kabīr Maulānā Zafar Ahmad Sāhib ʿUthmānī *rahimahullāh*. Maulānā Zafar Ahmad Sāhib *rahimahullāh* writes:

"I first thought of presenting a translation of *ʿAhd Muhammadīyyah* of ʿAllāmah Shaʿrānī *rahimahullāh* to my friends. But when I mentioned this intention before Hadrat Hakīm ul-Ummat *dāma majduhum*, he said to me: 'The book, *ʿAhd Muhammadīyyah* is a very voluminous book, and a lot of time will be spent in translating it. I feel you should first translate *al-Bahr al-Maurūd* because it is a shorter book, its themes are new, and it will be more beneficial for the masses.' I invoked Allāh's help and started translating it first."

This insignificant servant [Muhammad Qamar az-Zamān] is quoting the first part of it here. It is most beneficial and effective. May Allāh سبحانه وتعالى enable the reader to benefit from it. Āmīn.

Consider yourself to be below every Muslim

A covenant was taken from all of us (and we hope we are able to fulfil it through Allāh's grace) to consider ourselves lower than every Muslim. No matter what terrible condition he may have fallen into, we must consider ourselves to be lower than him. This was the attitude of all the pious predecessors – *may Allāh سبحانه وتعالى be pleased with them* – such as Wahb ibn Munabbih *rahimahullāh*, the righteous caliph ʿUmar ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz *rahimahullāh*, Hasan Basrī *rahimahullāh*, Sufyān

Thaurī *rahimahullāh*, Fudayl ibn ʿIyād *rahimahullāh* and ʿAmr ibn Yajīd *rahimahullāh*.

Wahb ibn Munabbih *rahimahullāh* and ʿUmar ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz *rahimahullāh* used to say: "A person cannot be humble until he does not consider anyone to be lower than himself from the time he leaves home until he returns."

ʿAmr ibn Yajīd *rahimahullāh* used to say: "A person cannot be described as possessing even the slightest amount of *ʿabdīyyat* (servitude) until he considers all acts of obedience to be ostentatious, and all conditions and situations to be false claims."

I heard Sayyidī ʿAlī Khawās *rahimahullāh* saying: "If any proud and haughty person doubts that his self is lower than the person next to him, he must present his entire life's mistakes and sins before his self (*nafs*), and compare them to the defects which he thinks are in the person next to him. He will certainly find his own sins to be more than that person's known defects. This is because a person is more aware of his own faults than the faults of others. The person who has more sins than the one sitting next to him is certainly lower than him in rank. What, right then, does he have to consider himself better. When some people do not have full knowledge of the sins of another, they assume he also has many sins which they do not know about."

It is not permissible for anyone to assume that his fellow companion has many sins, and think to himself that it is unlikely that Allāh ﷻ safeguarded this person from the sins which he himself is committing. This entails having evil thoughts about another, and is unlawful.

Assuming a person knows that another's faults are more than his own, even then, he must stop looking at the faults of others and remain fearful of Allāh ﷻ for his own sins. This is because it is better for every person to be fearful of Allāh ﷻ due to his own sins than bothering about counting the sins of others. This is especially so because he does not know for which sin Allāh ﷻ will take him to task, and which sin He will overlook. Allāh ﷻ may well pardon the other person and take you to task.

We can go one step further and say: Assuming you have many merits in you, and no fault; and the other person has no good at all, and only faults; even then you cannot consider yourself better than him because the principle of the Sharīʿah is: Deeds are considered on the basis of the end. How do you know your end will be on the same deeds [which you are doing at present], and that fate has not recorded something else for you? The other person who is presently filled with sins may possibly have a good end, and have a position higher than yours in Allāh's ﷻ sight. Thus, you should never consider yourself better than others. Instead, think to yourself that Allāh ﷻ did not give *taufīq* (inspiration) to the other

person to do good deeds, and He has the power of taking away your good deeds and giving them to him. Greatness and grandeur are for Allāh ﷻ alone.

A person's salvation lies in humility and servitude. Humility is the fundamental worship (*ʿibādah*) because *ʿibādah* refers to the peak of servitude. Learn this well.

Dear friend! This fact should not be concealed from you that this covenant is the obstacle to all the other covenants in this book. The person who enters with it will not even get a whiff of all the other covenants of this book. The person who considers himself better or equal to others will be deprived of its spiritual bestowal. Spiritual bestowal is like water which always flows to the low lands; it does not climb up to the highlands. And it remains standing on flat ground. Thus, if you consider yourself equal to anyone, the spiritual bestowal will remain stationary; it will not be able to reach you. This is why a proud person cannot acquire any bestowal from anyone. On the other hand, a humble person derives spiritual bestowal from even those who are seated next to him. Spiritual bestowal flows automatically and on its own to him; whether others will it or not. And so, such a person will not be able to count the number of his *mashā'ikh.*

Someone asked Sayyidī Shaykh ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz ad-Dabarīnī *raḫimahullāh* about his *mashā'ikh* of Ṯarīqah and their rank. He replied: "I cannot

count the number of my *mashā'ikh* because I derive benefit from every person I sit next to." He then quoted the following couplet:

وكل شيخ نلت منه علما – أو أدبا فهو إمامي حتما

"Any person from whom I acquire knowledge or etiquette, he is my shaykh and imām."

Dear friend! Consider yourself below every Muslim who is seated next to you so that you may be among the humble servants [of Allāh ﷻ]. Allāh ﷻ will then confer you with a high rank above your compatriots. A Hadīth states:

من تواضع لله رفعه الله

"Allāh ﷻ elevates the one who humbles himself for Allāh's sake."

So if you consider yourself greater than your fellow brethren, you will become their subject. But if you consider them senior to you with all your heart, you will become higher than them. But adopting humility to acquire superiority is also. Superiority through humility is only bestowed to the person who flees from superiority, and sincerely considers himself unworthy of anything. This is how humility can be for Allāh's ﷻ sake. But if humility is adopted for the sake of acquiring superiority, then it will be for one's own self [and not for Allāh ﷻ].

Allāh ﷾ did not create us to consider ourselves superior to others. But if we, out of gratitude, express a rank or level which Allāh ﷾ conferred us with, then there is no harm in it. Consequently, we hear of some claims made by certain *ʿārifīn*. They were either made under certain conditions, or as an expression of Allāh's ﷾ favours. This is stated in the following verse:

وَأَمَّا بِنِعْمَةِ رَبِّكَ فَحَدِّثْ

"As for the bounty of your Lord, make mention thereof." (Sūrah ad-Duhā, 93: 11)

It is never permissible for a person to mention Allāh's ﷾ favours out of pride and ostentation. Rasūlullāh ﷺ said:

لا يدخل الجنة من كان في قلبه مثقال ذرة من كبر يعني على أخيه مسلم

"The person who has even an iota of pride in his heart will not enter Paradise." That is, pride over his Muslim brother.

Abū Bakr Shiblī *rahimahullāh* said:

ذلي عطل ذل اليهود

"My abjectness rendered the Jews' abjectness null and void."

Meaning: The abjectness of the Jews is nothing compared to my abjectness. I am much more

contemptible than them. This is because the abjectness of each abject person is in accordance with his recognition. In other words, the more he recognizes the greatness of others, the more contemptible he will consider himself to be. Without doubt, the recognition of Allāh's greatness and grandeur which Hadrat Shiblī *rahimahullāh* had was definitely not possessed by the Jews. And so, after witnessing the greatness and grandeur of Allāh ﷻ, Hadrat Shiblī *rahimahullāh* considered himself absolutely contemptible and insignificant. On the other hand, although the Jews are treated with contempt by people, they consider themselves to be of some worth. Hadrat Shiblī *rahimahullāh* genuinely considered himself contemptible in a manner which the Jews never considered themselves. So his abjectness was far more than the Jews'. This is because the Jews are only considered contemptible by others, while they themselves do not accept this. On the other hand, Hadrat Shiblī *rahimahullāh* was most contemptible in his own sight, even though people held him in high regard.

Understand well! A person who is humble will stand out of respect for every Muslim who comes to him because he regards him to be better than himself, and does not have any airs about himself. Then when Allāh ﷻ confers him with perfection and firmness in his humility, then as per the order of the Sharī'ah, he gives up standing up for a flagrant sinner (*fāsiq*) so that it [his not according him any respect] may serve as

a reprimand to him, and he may also uphold the order of the Sharīʿah. This is because standing up [out of respect] is only promulgated to display the honour of *ʿulamā'* and the righteous. As for the person who is an open sinner, he is not eligible for such respect. Allāh ﷻ did not permit us to stand up for any person who does not have any virtue. In other words, it is not permissible to stand up out of respect for such a person. It will be permissible if expediency demands it, e.g. to win over his heart with the hope of rectifying his ways, or to repulse his evil.

In the definition of the Tarīqah, a *kāmil* person (one who has reached a level of perfection) is one who possesses the quality of *ʿadl* (equity) because he gives full consideration to *iʿtidāl* (balance and equilibrium). Such a person is given the title of Abul ʿUyūn (a person who has many eyes) because he has an eye for everything and sees each thing through a different eye. For example, if he has humility solely for Allāh's ﷻ sake, he will always see himself to be insignificant compared to every companion.

Sayyidī Abul Hasan Shādhilī *rahimahullāh* used to say: "A person cannot reach a level of perfection in gratitude (*shukr*) as long as he does not consider the wealth and riches of kings to be less than his own." Someone asked him: "How can such a thought be correct?" He replied: "The king himself is from among the bounties which Allāh ﷻ conferred on this person because it is through the king that his *Dīn*, honour and wealth

are protected; and the salient features (*shaʿā'ir*) of Islam are upheld. If the king was not present, *Dīn* would have been suppressed. So if all the wealth and riches of the king are for you as well, why are you considering them [king's wealth and riches] to be more than your own bounties? Rather, they are also bounties which are being showered on you."

Abūl Qāsim Junayd *rahimahullāh* used to say: "A person cannot reach a stage of perfection in humility and gratitude as long as he thinks he is worthy of Allāh's mercy. Instead, if Allāh ﷻ shows mercy to him, he must consider it to be solely out of Allāh's grace and kindness." Hadrat Shaykh *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* most probably considers this to mean non-eligibility, because if a person thinks that he is not worthy in the least of Allāh's mercy, it could lead to despondency. And a person becomes a *kāfir* if he is despondent of Allāh's mercy. A Muslim is always hopeful of Allāh's mercy.

I heard ʿAlī Khawās *rahimahullāh* saying: "A person cannot reach the rank of humility as long as he considers himself better in Allāh's sight than any of the creation. In other words, he should not consider himself better than any specific creation. But where Rasūlullāh ﷺ specifically stated that such and such person is bound to go to Hell or is a *kāfir*, he should certainly consider himself to be better than him as a way of expressing gratitude to Allāh ﷻ. There is no harm in considering oneself better than all

unbelievers, polytheists, *ahl-e-bidʿah* (innovators) and flagrant sinners – without specifying any particular person from among them - after considering the fact that he is saved from all this solely due to Allāh's grace and mercy. In other words, he can think to himself thus: By the grace and kindness of Allāh ﷻ, he did not make me a *kāfir*, polytheist, *bidʿatī*, and flagrant sinner. But he should not specify and say: I am better than such and such *kāfir*, *bidʿatī*, or flagrant sinner. Instead, he should lower himself before the entire creation. This was the mark and refuge of all the *ʿārifīn*. As long as a person assumes a high position for himself, and then lowers himself from it in order to intermingle with people, then he is from among the proud ones. Even when he displays humility, he does it after considering himself superior to those before whom he is displaying humility. This is because he has assumed a certain position higher than theirs for himself, from which he lowers himself and intermingles with people. The humility of the *ʿārifīn* is not like this.

I heard him saying this on numerous occasions: "The sign of a person who is genuinely embellished with humility is that he bears whatever harm the creation imposes on him, and he does not return the pain with revenge. Instead, he responds as a slave to his master."

This is what enabled the poor to bear the pains caused by people. Had they considered themselves equal to and greater than the people,

they would have responded as they are treated. And so, they consider themselves to be the slaves of the creation.

Dear friend! Ponder a little over the condition of a slave. Once he gauges the rank of his master who purchased him and paid for him, then even if his master had to swear or beat him, he would lower his head and remain silent. This ought to be the condition of a person endowed with humility.

Another sign of a genuinely humble person is that when anyone asks him for anything, he does not refuse (unless there is a Shar'ī reason for refusing). He thus behaves like a slave to his master. Another sign is that he never thinks someone will stand out of respect for him or that he is eligible for such respect. The same goes with a slave – let alone not hoping for such respect from his master, he cannot even allow such thoughts to cross his mind.

Another sign: If anyone criticizes him or accuses him of certain faults, he is not angered by it. Instead, he thinks to himself: “These criticisms and accusations are correct. I am as he says. In fact, I am worse than that because he does not even know my real faults. If he speaks ill of me, he has the right to do so because he is better than me.” But if Shar'ī expediency is contrary to this, he should think in his heart that he has these faults, but he must express his innocence verbally.

Another sign of a truly humble person is that he does not have the courage to enter a musjid on his own. Instead, he enters it with other people. When he enters a musjid and does not find anyone in it, he remains standing at the entrance until someone else enters. There are many underlying reasons and mysteries behind this, and these are known to the *Ahlullāh* alone. I have explained this in some of my writings. All praise belongs to Allāh ﷻ.

Another sign of a truly humble person is that he should feel indebted to those who permit him to sit in an assembly, reply to his *salām*, or offer *salām* to him. An explanation of this is as follows: In his *sulūk*, a Sufi reaches a stage where he sees many faults within himself. His errors and sins appear so manifest to him, that it seems as if everyone knows about them. At such a time, he considers himself to be a *fāsiq* (flagrant sinner) whose sins are openly manifest. He does not even consider himself worthy of someone replying to his *salām* because he sees many sins within himself, and they are so openly manifest as if they are not hidden from anyone. He does not see anything else within himself. This is especially so when he thinks of Allāh's ﷻ wrath and power. In such a case, his fear over the sins will be much more in his heart, or he would have become like those who consider their internal sins equal to their external sins. This is because Allāh ﷻ has knowledge of everything. In such a case, he will not think of himself worthy of anything.

Another sign of a humble person is that no matter how many claims of perfection people make about themselves, he considers them all to be more than what they claim, and he thinks to himself: Those who are on earth cannot fathom the ranks of those who are in the heavens. In other words, it is difficult for a person of a lower level to encompass the conditions of those who are on higher levels. So if I do not know their conditions, their claims may be correct because I am lower than them.

Every person must gauge himself in the light of the above signs. If he finds himself embellished with them, he must express gratitude to Allāh ﷻ. If not, he must repent sincerely from pride in Allāh's court. The occasional expressions of humility, e.g. "I am not even equal to the dust on their feet", etc. will be false and lies.

Understand this well and practise on it; you will witness its blessings. May Allāh ﷻ guide you. (*ad-Durr al-Mandūd*, p. 44)

I now quote a few lines from Hadrat ʿAllāmah ʿAbd al-Wahhāb Shaʿrānī's *rahimahullāh* book, *Anwār al-Qudsīyyah*, on the subject of the greatness of servitude:

"All levels, ranks and stations are insignificant before absolute and pure servitude. There is no easier way to proximity with Allāh ﷻ than servitude because the path of servitude entails nothing but humility, humbleness, meekness,

and self-effacement." (*Anwār al-Qudsīyyah* of ʿAllāmah Shaʿrānī *rahimahullāh*, as quoted in *Aqwāl-e-Salaf*, vol. 2, under the chapter, *Tadhkirah ʿAllāmah Shaʿrānī*)

The statements and sayings of Hadrat Maulānā ʿAbd al-Ghanī Sāhib Phulpūrī *rahimahullāh*, a *khalīfah* of Hadrat Hakīmul Ummat *rahimahullāh*, have been compiled by Hadrat Maulānā Hakīm Muhammad Akhtar Sāhib *dāmat barakātuhum* in a book titled *Maʿrifat-e-Ilāhīyyah*. I am taking the opportunity of quoting some parts of it.

Faqīrī **entails self-effacement**

Maulānā Sayyid Sulaymān Sāhib *rahimahullāh* once asked Hadrat Thānwī *rahimahullāh*: "Hadrat, what is the meaning of *faqīrī*?" Hadrat Thānwī *rahimahullāh* replied: "*Faqīrī* entails self-effacement/self-obliteration." On hearing this, Hadrat Sayyid Sāhib *rahimahullāh* was reduced to tears. The essence of *sulūk* and *tasawwuf* is to obliterate one's self.

Self-effacement does not mean the person must commit suicide. It means you must make all your goals and desires subservient to the will and pleasure of Allāh ﷾. Rasūlullāh ﷺ says:

لا يؤمن أحدكم حتى يكون هواه تبعا لما جئت به

"None of you can be a complete believer until all his desires are subservient to [the injunctions of Allāh ﷾] which I came with."

This subservience is known as *fanā’īyyat* (self-effacement).

He writes further:

This treasure cannot be acquired without remaining in the company of a *kāmil* shaykh

It is the norm of Allāh ﷾ that this treasure cannot be acquired without remaining in the company of a *kāmil* shaykh. How did the Sahābah ﵃ acquire this treasure of *fanā’īyyat*? The answer to it is found in the word “Sahābī” itself. The word “Sahābī” makes us think of a person who remained in the company of Rasūlullāh ﷺ. Hadrat ‘Ārif Rūmī *rahimahullāh* says in this regard:

“The *nafs* cannot experience self-effacement unless it remains in the shade of a *kāmil* shaykh. You should therefore hold on firmly to this destroyer of the *nafs*.” (*Ma‘rifat-e-Ilāhīyyah*, p. 367)

An incident portraying the humility of Hadrat Bāyazīd Bustāmī *rahimahullāh*

I heard this story on several occasions from Hadrat Murshidī Maulānā Muhammad Ahmad Sāhib Partābgarhī *rahimahullāh*: Hadrat Bāyazīd Bustāmī *rahimahullāh* was going somewhere with his *murīds* when someone threw ash on him from above. His *murīds* became upset and began saying harsh things [to the person who threw it].

Hadrat stopped them and said: "Do not say any harsh words to him. If a head which deserves the fire receives just ash, the matter will be easy for it."

When Hadrat *rahimahullāh* related this story on one occasion, he screamed out [in anguish] when he uttered the last statement.

Overlook the mistakes of friends

Hadrat Maulānā ʿAbd al-Haqq Muhaddith Dehlawī *rahimahullāh* writes in *Uswah as-Sālihīn*: "To overlook and pardon the mistakes of friends is the way of the *sālihīn* (righteous) and their loftiest character. An immature and ignoble person does not have it within himself to pardon and overlook. This is because pardon requires a lot of courage."

"We have to understand one thing at this point. The prohibition of severing relations for more than three days is not a general prohibition. If a person sees the protection of his *Dīnī* and worldly affairs in dissociating from someone, it is permissible for him to remain aloof from him for more than three days – in fact, for the rest of his life. This was the way of the Sahābah ﵁, Tābiʿūn and Tabaʿ Tābiʿūn. There were those among them who severed relations and friendship, but they had a good intention for doing it, viz. protection of their *Dīn*. However, it is not permissible to harbour any hatred or malice for one's Muslim brother.

Note: It is permissible to sever relations from a person if worldly harm is ascertained with certainty. But one should not harbour any malice for him. But if one severed relations because of his irreligiousness, one should have dislike and malice for his as well, because Rasūlullāh ﷺ said:

الحب لله والبغض لله

“Love for Allāh’s sake, and hatred for Allāh’s sake.”

Rasūlullāh ﷺ said that this is a branch of *īmān*. (*Uswah as-Sālihīn*)

Comment by Hadrat Muslihul Ummat Maulānā Shāh Wasīyyullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh*

It is popularly believed that one should not sever ties for more than three days. This is certainly not the case. I present an investigation of this issue by Hadrat [Muslihul Ummat] *rahimahullāh* in which he quotes a Hadīth and the opinions of the *‘ulamā’* in this regard. I am presenting the original text with its translation for the benefit of the reader.

عن أبي أيوب الأنصاري رضي الله عنه قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: لا يحل للرجل أن يهجر أخاه أي المسلم وأعم من أخوة القرابة والصحابة، قال الطيبي: وتخصيصه بالذكر إشعار بالعلية والمراد به أخوة إسلام، ويفهم منه أنه إن خالف هذه الشريطة وقطع هذه الرابطة جاز هجرانه فوق ثلاثة. انتهى.

Hadrat Abū Ayyūb Ansārī ﷺ narrates that Rasūlullāh ﷺ said: "It is not permissible for a person to sever ties from his [Muslim] brother for more than three days. The word "brother" is used in a general sense, and refers to brotherhood through family ties and companionship. ʿAllāmah Tībī *rahimahullāh* says that the word "brother" is brought to make reference to the reason for prohibition, and it refers to brotherhood on the basis of Islam. We also understand from this that if this condition [of a bond on the basis of Islam] is not found, and this bond is severed, it is permissible to sever ties with him for more than three days.

وفيه أنه حينئذ يجب هجرانه وقوله (فوق ثلاث ليال) أي بأيامها وإنما جاز الهجر في ثلاث وما دونه لما جبل عليه الآدمي من الغضب فسومح بذالك القدر ليرجع فيها ويزول ذلك الغرض، ذكره السيوطي.

In such a case, let alone severing ties being permissible, it is *wājib* to sever ties from such a person. The three nights which are mentioned in the Hadīth include the days as well. The permission to sever ties for three days or less is that when a person becomes angry with another, it is natural for him to stop talking to him. And by stipulating this time period, the Sharīʿah wants us to revert to the previous condition [where both were speaking to each other]. This is stated by ʿAllāmah Suyūtī *rahimahullāh*.

قال الخطابي رخص للمسلم أن يغضب على أخيه ثلاث ليال لقلته ولا يجوز فوقها إلا إذا كان الهجران في حق من حقوق الله تعالى فيجوز فوق ذلك.

ʻAllāmah Khaṯṯābī *raḫimahullāh* says: A concession is given to a Muslim to sever ties from his brother for three days because it is a small number, and did not permit more than three days unless it is on the basis of one of the rights of Allāh ﷻ. In such a case, severing ties for more than three days is permissible.

قال ابن عبد البر هذا مخصوص بحديث كعب بن مالك ورفيقيه حيث أمر صلى الله عليه وسلم أصحابه بهجرهم يعني زيادة على ثلاثة إلى أن بلغ خمسين يوما، قال وأجمع العلماء على أن من خاف مكالمة من أحد وصلته ما يفسد عليه دينه أو يدخل مضرة في دنياه يجوز له مجانبته وبعده، ورب هجر جميل خير من مخالطة موذية.

ʻAllāmah Ibn ʻAbd al-Barr *raḫimahullāh* says: “The three days’ concession to sever ties is a specific concession [and not a general permission] on the basis of the incident concerning Kaʻb ibn Mālik ؓ and his two companions. Rasūlullāh ﷺ ordered his S̱aḫābah ؓ to sever ties from these three for not only three days but fifty days.” He states further: “The *ʻulamā’* unanimously state that if a person feels that speaking to a certain person or maintaining contact with him will cause him *Dīnī* or worldly harm, it is permissible for him to remain aloof from him. Many a time, a dignified

separation is better then an intermingling which is harmful.

وفي النهاية يريد به الهجر ضد الوصل يعني فيما يكون بين المسلمين من عتب وموجدة أو تقصير يقع في حقوق العشرة والصحبة دون ما كان من ذلك في جانب الدين، فإن هجرة أهل الهواء والبدع واجبة على مر الأوقات ما لم يظهر منه التوبة والرجوع إلى الحق فإنه صلى الله عليه وسلم لما خاف على كعب بن مالك وأصحابه النفاق حين تخلفوا عن غزوة التبوك أمر بهجرانهم خمسين يوما، وقد هجر نساءه شهرا.

It is stated in *an-Nihāyah*: The word *hajr* (separation) is the opposite of *wasl* (joining). In other words, it refers to the things which occurs among Muslims, e.g. mutual differences, anger, shortcomings in social contacts, and companionship. It does not refer to the bases of differences which are because of *Dīn*. This is because it is *wājib* to sever ties from those who follow their whims and commit *bidʿah* – no matter how long it is – as long as they do not repent from the *bidʿah* and return to the truth. When Rasūlullāh ﷺ feared hypocrisy on Kaʿb ibn Mālik رضي الله عنه and his companions when they remained behind [from joining the expedition to Tabūk], he ordered the Sahābah رضي الله عنهم to sever ties from them for fifty days. In like manner, Rasūlullāh ﷺ severed ties from his wives for one month.

وهجرت عائشة ابن الزبير مدة وهجر جماعة من الصحابة جماعة منهم وماتوا متهاجرين، ولعل أحد الأمرين منسوخ بالآخر.

Similarly, H̲ad̲rat ʿĀ'ishah *rad̲iyallāhu ʿanhā* severed ties from H̲ad̲rat ʿAbdullāh ibn az-Zubayr ﵁ for a long period of time. Some S̲ah̲ābah ﵃ severed ties from other S̲ah̲ābah and departed from this world in this state [of having severed ties]. (There seems to be a contradiction between the above-mentioned H̲adīth and all these incidents. We can say this in reply): One of them is probably abrogated by the other (i.e. the prohibition of three days was in the beginning, and was abrogated later on).

قلت الأظهر أن يحمل نحو هذا الحديث على المتواخيين أو المتساوين بخلاف الوالد مع الولد والأستاذ مع تلميذه وعليه يحمل ما وقع من السلف والخلف لبعض الخلف، ويمكن أن يقال الهجرة المحرمة إنما تكون مع العداوة والشحناء كما يدل عليه الحديث الذي يليه فغيرها إما مباح أو خلاف الأولى. (مرقاة، ج٤، ص٧٦)

I [the author of *an-Nihāyah*] say: It seems that a H̲adīth of this nature be applied to a relationship which exists between two equal friends. It does not apply to the relationship which exists between a father and son, and teacher and student [or shaykh and *murīd*]. Incidents containing severance of ties which occurred among some people of the past were also of this nature. [And so, the H̲adīth does not include them]. It could also be said that the prohibited severance of ties is the one which includes enmity and malice, as indicated in the following H̲adīth. Any other type of severance will either be permissible (*mubāh̲*) or not the ideal (*khilāf-e-aulā*). (*Ādāb as̲-S̲ālih̲īn, tarjumah Uswah as̲-S̲ālih̲īn*, p. 117)

Now consider the following <u>H</u>adīth with regard to pardoning and overlooking:

عن عائشة قالت قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: أقيلوا ذوي الهيئات عثراتهم إلا الحدود.

<u>H</u>a<u>d</u>rat ʿĀ'ishah *ra<u>d</u>iyallāhu ʿanhā* narrates that Rasūlullāh ﷺ said: "Overlook [and pardon] the mistakes of the pious people, except the *<u>h</u>udūd* (crimes punishable according to Islamic law)."

<u>H</u>a<u>d</u>rat Maulānā Khalīl A<u>h</u>mad <u>S</u>ā<u>h</u>ib Sahāranpūrī *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* writes in his commentary to this <u>H</u>adīth:

قال في الدرجات، قال الشافعي رحمه الله: ذوو الهيئة من لم تظهر منهم ريبة، وفي النهاية من لا يعرفون بشر فينزل أحدهم زلة، أي تجاوزوا عن ذوي الهيئات الحسنة وهم من لزموا هيئة واحدة وسمتا واحدا خيرا فلا تختلف حالاتهم بأن تنقلهم من كذا إلى كذا هيئة.

Ad-Darajāt states that Imām Shāfiʿī *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* said: "The *dhawil hay'āt* are those whose doubtful acts were not exposed." *An-Nihāyah* states: "They are those who are not known to have committed any evil. If they err, then overlook the faults of such righteous people. They are those who remain steadfast on a constant good condition, and whose conditions do not change from one to another."

وقال البيضاوي ذوي الهيئات أصحاب الذوات والخصال الحميدة، أو ذوي الوجوه من الناس، والعثرات صغار الذنوب وما يندر عنهم من خطايا، فالإستثناء في قوله إلا الحدود منقطع أو الذنوب مطلقا وبالحدود ما يوجبها فيكون متصلا والخطاب مع الأئمة وغيرهم ممن يستحق مؤاخذة وتأديبا عليها. (بذل المجهود، ج١٢، ص٤٤٠)

Al-Baydāwī *rahimahullāh* said: The *dhawil hay'āt* are those who possess excellent and praiseworthy qualities, or people of rank. And *ʿatharāt* [mentioned in the Hadīth] refer to minor sins and mistakes which are committed occasionally by them. Thus, Rasūlullāh's ﷺ exception "except the *hudūd* (crimes punishable according to Islamic law)" is an absolute exception. Alternatively, *ʿatharāt* could refer to sins in general, and *hudūd* refers to sins which impose punishment according to *hudūd* laws. In such a case, the exception will be unbroken, and the addressees will be the imāms (people of authority and position) and others who deserve to be taken to task and be disciplined.

A person's honour increases when he pardons

عن أبي هريرة قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم ما نقصت صدقة من مال وما زاد الله عبدا بعفو إلا عزا وما تواضع أحد لله إلا رفعه الله. (رواه مسلم)

Hadrat Abū Hurayrah ﷺ narrates that Rasūlullāh ﷺ said: "No charity ever decreased any wealth. Allāh ﷻ most certainly increases the honour of the person who pardons another. The person who

humbles himself for Allāh's ﷻ sake is most certainly elevated by Allāh ﷻ." (Muslim)

Explanation: Three points are mentioned here:

(1) Spending a certain portion of one's wealth in Allāh's ﷻ path. Although it may appear as if this is causing a decrease in wealth, charity is essentially a means of increase in wealth. The person giving in charity is conferred with blessings in his wealth. He and his wealth are protected against calamities, and additional rewards are recorded in his book of deeds. In fact, even in this world he receives excellent returns which continually increase his wealth.

(2) If a person overlooks the shortcomings of another despite having the power of exacting revenge from him, Allāh ﷻ increases his honour in this world and in the Hereafter. An *'ārif* said: "There is no revenge sweeter than pardon and overlooking."

(3) If a person remains humble solely for Allāh's ﷻ pleasure and for gaining proximity to Him – and not for any other purpose – Allāh ﷻ elevates his rank in this world and in the Hereafter.

Note: We learn from this Hadīth that we must overlook the mistakes of noble people. We should neither wait for opportunities to point fingers at them, nor should we disclose their mistakes by our tongues and pens. If the person is a nobleman and person of influence, we should

certainly overlook his faults. If a wretched person constantly points fingers at the pious personalities, he is committing a serious evil.

Shaykh Saʿdī *rahimahullāh* says: "Criticizing the pious elders for their mistakes is a sin in itself." Obviously, if they commit an act which is in contravention of the Sharīʿah, one may inform them respectfully.

A synopsis of what has been said

O Muslim men and women! You should constantly acknowledge your sins and request Allāh ﷻ to pardon you. Allāh ﷻ is most gracious and forgiving. In like manner, if you fall short in fulfilling the rights of fellow humans, you must ask the person to pardon you together with repenting to Allāh ﷻ and seeking His forgiveness. Try to obtain the person's pleasure, no matter what.

If someone does not fulfil your rights – even if he is your junior – you must pardon him. If he asks you to pardon him, you must most certainly do so. Similarly, if seniors – e.g. parents, teachers, etc. – fall short in fulfilling your rights, then instead of displaying your annoyance, you must pardon them with all your heart. In fact, you should respond in a manner which convinces the seniors that you are not annoyed in the least. This is what love and respect for them demands. Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Ahmad Sāhib Partābgarhī *rahimahullāh* said in this regard:

"It is an indication of intense love if he [my shaykh] is displeased with me. But if I am displeased with him, there is no love whatsoever."

If a senior intercedes on behalf of another, you must pardon the person. This is the right of the senior's seniority which one has to fulfil. In fact, even if a senior asks you to pardon the mistake of a junior, you must pardon him. Never say: "He is lower than me, he is younger than me; I am higher than him, I am elder than him – how can I pardon him!?" If you behave in this manner, you will be responding just like Satan. When Allāh ﷻ ordered all the angels and Satan to prostrate before Ādam ؑ, everyone fell into prostration without hesitation. But Satan – in his pride and haughtiness – refused to prostrate, and provided the following proof for his refusal:

أَنَا خَيْرٌ مِّنْهُ، خَلَقْتَنِيْ مِنْ نَّارٍ وَّخَلَقْتَهُ مِنْ طِيْنٍ

"I am better than him; You created me from fire, while You created him from soil."

Rasūlullāh ﷺ requests Hadrat 'Alqamah's ؓ mother to pardon him

Hadrat 'Alqamah ؓ was a Sahābī who was very particular about performing salāh and keeping fast. When his time to depart from this world arrived, he could not utter the *kalimah-e-shahādah*. His wife sent a person to convey this to Rasūlullāh ﷺ. Rasūlullāh ﷺ asked: "Are his

parents alive or not?” It was learnt that his mother was alive, and she was displeased with him. Rasūlullāh ﷺ sent a message to his mother saying: “I would like to meet you. Will you come to me or should I come to you?” Hadrat ʿAlqamah’s ؓ old mother replied: “O Rasūlullāh! May my parents be sacrificed for you. I do not want to burden you. I will come personally to meet you.”

His mother came to Rasūlullāh ﷺ who asked her about ʿAlqamah ؓ. She replied: “He is a very pious son but he always disobeys me by giving preference to his wife over me. This is why I am displeased with him.” Rasūlullāh ﷺ said: “It will be best for him if you pardon him.” But the old woman refused. Rasūlullāh ﷺ ordered Hadrat Bilāl ؓ to gather firewood and to burn ʿAlqamah ؓ.” On hearing this, the old woman became terrified and asked: “Will my son be burnt in the fire?” Rasūlullāh ﷺ replied: “Yes. Our punishment is light compared to Allāh’s punishment. By Allāh, as long as you are displeased with him, neither is his salāh accepted nor his charity.”

The old woman said: “I make you and all who are present here witness to the fact that I have pardoned ʿAlqamah.” Rasūlullāh ﷺ said to the people: “Go and see if ʿAlqamah is uttering the *kalimah* or not.” The people returned and said to Rasūlullāh ﷺ: “He commenced saying the *kalimah*, and passed away while saying it.” Rasūlullāh ﷺ instructed the people to see to his

bathing and enshrouding (*ghusl wa kafan*), and attended the *janāzah* himself.

After the burial, Rasūlullāh ﷺ said: “Anyone from the Anṣār and Muhājirūn who disobeys his parents and causes them harm shall earn the curse of Allāh ﷻ, His Messenger ﷺ and all people.”

H̲ad̲rat Shaykh Farīd ad-Dīn Ganjshakar pardons a sorcerer

H̲ad̲rat Shaykh Nas̲īr ad-Dīn Audhī relates from his shaykh: H̲ad̲rat Bābā Farīd ad-Dīn Ganjshakar fell extremely ill on one occasion. He instructed his *murīd*, H̲ad̲rat Niz̲ām ad-Dīn Auliyā’, and son, Shaykh Badr ad-Dīn Sulaymān, to become occupied in the *dhikr* of *h̲aqq*. They carried out his orders. The same night, Shaykh Badr ad-Dīn Sulaymān saw a dream in which the son of Shihāb ad-Dīn the sorcerer, performed sorcery on H̲ad̲rat Bābā Farīd ad-Dīn Ganjshakar. He was treated and, by Allāh’s grace, recovered from his illness.

When the ruler of Ajūdhan heard of this, he became extremely angry. He had Shihāb ad-Dīn’s son tied in chains, and sent him to H̲ad̲rat Shaykh al-Islam [Farīd ad-Dīn Ganjshakar] saying: “This sorcerer has got to be killed. If you order me, I will kill him.” The shaykh replied: “The essential curer [Allāh ﷻ] cured me. So in my gratitude to Him, I am pardoning the sorcerer. You should also pardon him.”

Satan was neither an *ʿālim, ʿārif* nor an *ʿābid*

The *ʿulamā'* state that Satan was the first person to resort to logic against the explicit text of Allāh ﷻ. Obviously, he did something totally illogical on account of which he was accursed and disgraced. However, it is quite unfortunate that some scholars consider him to be an *ʿārif, ʿālim, ʿābid*; but not an *ʿāshiq* (one who loves Allāh ﷻ). I say: Had he been an *ʿālim* and *ʿārif*, he would never done something so ignorant because knowledge which does not convey one to the truth is not knowledge, but ignorance. Shaykh Saʿdī *rahimahullāh* says:

"O Saʿdī! Wash off the slate of your heart with all except Allāh ﷻ because any knowledge which does not guide you to the truth is not knowledge, but ignorance."

In addition to this, the fruit of genuine knowledge and recognition (*maʿrifat*) is fear and consciousness of Allāh ﷻ. Is there anyone who possessed more knowledge and recognition than Rasūlullāh ﷺ? Yet he says about himself:

إني لأعلمهم بالله وأشدهم خشية (مشكوة، ص٢٧)

"I have more knowledge of Allāh ﷻ, and I am more fearful of Him."

Just as Satan was not an *ʿārif* and *ʿālim*, he was also not an *ʿābid* (worshipper). This is because

ʿibādah refers to an act in which Allāh's ﷻ pleasure is sought. Satan did not prostrate even once for Allāh's pleasure. Rather, he engaged in excessive prostrations out of greed for deputyship on earth. Such prostrations have no value in Allāh's sight if they are not done in quest for Allāh's pleasure.

In his commentary to the verse:

أَبَى وَاسْتَكْبَرَ وَكَانَ مِنَ الْكَافِرِيْنَ

"He [Satan] refused and vexed pride, and was from among the unbelievers."

Shaykh al-Hind Maulānā Mahmūd al-Hasan Sāhib *rahimahullāh* writes:

"The jinn had been inhabiting the world for several thousand years. They also used to go up to the heavens. When their corruption and blood shedding increased, the angels, acting on the order of Allāh, killed a few; and the rest were scattered in the jungles, mountains and islands. Satan was a great scholar and worshipper among them. He displayed his immunity from the corruption of the other jinn. He was saved through the intercession of the angels and began living with them. He devoted himself fully to worship in the hope that from among all the jinn he will be the only one who will be able to act without restriction in the land. Furthermore, he continued strengthening his hopes and thoughts with regard to deputyship on earth. But when the

order for deputyship was pronounced in favour of Ādam عليه السلام, Satan became despondent. On realising the futility of his deceptive worship, he was overwhelmed by sheer jealousy and did what he did, thus becoming accursed. He was predestined as an unbeliever in the knowledge of Allāh, but this infidelity of his was only made apparent to others now. Alternatively, we could say that he became an unbeliever now. The reason for this is that he rejected the order of Allāh because of his haughtiness. Furthermore, he considered the command of Allāh to be unwise, imprudent and degrading. Satan was therefore declared an unbeliever not only because he refused to prostrate, but because of the above-mentioned reasons as well.” (*Tafsīr-e-ʿUthmānī*)

Note: Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* used to say: “Had Satan prostrated just once for Allāh’s سبحانه وتعالى sake, he would not have been accursed and driven out. This is because sincerity is essential for the acceptance of deeds and salvation in the Hereafter. If there is sincerity in deeds and they are done in accordance with the Sunnah, man will gain proximity to Allāh سبحانه وتعالى and be saved from His displeasure.”

Just ponder! One’s intellect and logic are absolutely insignificant before Allāh’s explicit texts. The example of the intellect is as portrayed in the following couplet:

“A person talking about using the intellect while Rasūlullāh ﷺ is present in the world is similar to

a person looking for a star in the presence of the sun."

The wisdom of a baker

Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* used to relate the story of a baker. A baker used to sell fresh bread at night. Some people used to pay him with counterfeit money [coins], and take his fresh bread in return. Others came to know of this, and so, they went to him and said: "Are you aware that some people are paying you with counterfeit money and taking your lovely fresh bread in return?" He replied: "I am aware of it, but I tolerate it because on the day of Resurrection I will say to Allāh ﷻ: 'O Allāh! I used to accept the counterfeit money of people and give them my lovely fresh bread in return. O Allāh! Accept my counterfeit deeds and bless me with Your rewards.'"

Glory to Allāh! Look at the wisdom and intelligence of this baker.

Together with fulfilling the rights of Allāh ﷻ, we all have to be very particular about fulfilling the rights of our fellow humans. As far as possible, we should avoid contact and dealings where we may cause harm to believers instead of conveying happiness and joy to them. This is the mark of every Muslim. There is a famous Hadīth:

المسلم من سلم المسلمون من لسانه ويده

"A true Muslim is one from whose tongue and hand other Muslims are safe."

Allāh's ﷻ pleasure takes precedence over everything

There is one thing we have to be careful about, viz. the pleasure of Allāh ﷻ should not be disregarded in our efforts to please the creation. H̲ad̲rat 'Ā'ishah *rad̲iyallāhu 'anhā* gave the following advice to H̲ad̲rat Mu'āwiyah ﷺ. Every Muslim ought to practise on it.

عن معاوية رضي الله عنه أنه كتب إلى عائشة أن أكتبني إلي كتابا توصيني فيه ولا تكثري، فكتبت: سلام عليك، أما بعد، فإني سمعت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يقول: من التمس رضى الله بسخط الناس كفاه الله مؤنة الناس، ومن التمس رضى الناس بسخط الله، وكّله الله إلى الناس، والسلام عليك. (مشكوة شريف، ج٢، ص٤٣٥)

H̲ad̲rat Mu'āwiyah ﷺ wrote a letter to H̲ad̲rat 'Ā'ishah *rad̲iyallāhu 'anhā* saying: "Give me some concise advice." She replied: "Peace be to you. I heard Rasūlullāh ﷺ saying: 'The person who seeks Allāh's pleasure while earning people's displeasure, Allāh ﷻ will safeguard him against the harm of people. The person who seeks people's pleasure while earning Allāh's ﷻ displeasure, Allāh ﷻ will hand him over to the

people [who will then do as they like with him].' Peace be on you."

This is because it does not entail good character. Rather, it is the worst type of evil character. Hadrat Muslihul Ummat Maulānā Shāh Wasīyyullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* quotes the following definition of character from a certain book:

معاملتك لكل أحد يسرّه إلا ما خالف الشرع.

"Good character means your dealing with each person in a manner which pleases him, except what is against the Sharīʿah."

If it is against the Sharīʿah, it is *harām* to earn his pleasure. For example, we see people committing evils during elections merely to please their friends and relatives. Similarly, look at our weddings of today. So many un-Islamic practices take place, but we accommodate them happily just to please our families. In like manner, we participate unhesitatingly in usurious (interest) transactions and businesses of play and amusement. We do not abstain from eating and drinking at such places. In short, there are many dealings in which we cast aside Allāh's ﷻ pleasure and give preference to the pleasure of others. We seek refuge in Allāh ﷻ. May Allāh ﷻ protect us from such futile "good character" and inopportune sense of honour. Āmīn.

The mutual dealings and conditions of people today

Now observe some of the other dealings of people today. Let alone overlooking and pardoning our fellow Muslims, a blood brother cannot bear to see his brother's material prosperity and authority. We seek refuge in Allāh ﷻ. A poet says:

"I have heard that the *Ahlullāh* do not cause grief even to their enemies. How can you reach the rank of the *Ahlullāh* if you are at war with your own friends and brothers!? I am saying, let alone friends, people behave in a hostile way towards their parents, teachers and shaykh."

I heard my shaykh, Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Ahmad Sāhib *rahimahullāh*, saying: "Let alone observing genuine character today, we do not even see people displaying superficial character. Even verbal compassion and consolation has disappeared."

Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Ahmad Sāhib *rahimahullāh* composed a few lines of poetry in this regard. He says:

"You see humans devoid of love, and the times are filled with evil. Love, a sense of honour and obedience have all disappeared. Look at the father and the son. There is neither any value in the days nor in the nights. Look at the effects of sins."

People have abandoned practising on the following Hadīth:

ليس منا من لم يرحم صغيرنا ولم يؤقر كبيرنا

"The one who does not show mercy to our juniors and does not accord respect to our seniors is not of us."

Let alone the masses, even the learned are not excluded from this. Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Ahmad Sāhib *rahimahullāh* provides the following treatment:

"Become a rain of mercy and pervade the world with it. This world is burning, pour down and extinguish its fire. Display the character of Rasūlullāh ﷺ and embrace outsiders as well."

Humility is one of the internal Sunnahs of Rasūlullāh ﷺ

The highest example of Rasūlullāh's ﷺ character is humility, servitude, and purity of the heart. One of his internal Sunnahs is the absence of malice in the heart. Rasūlullāh ﷺ said:

عن أنس قال قال لي رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم، يا بني إن قدرت أن تصبح وتمسي وليس في قلبك غش لأحد فافعل، ثم قال: يا بني، ذلك من سنتي، ومن أحب سنتي فقد أحبني ومن أحبني كان معي في الجنة. (ترمذي)

Anas ﵁ narrates: "Rasūlullāh ﷺ said to me: 'O son! If you can pass the day and night without harbouring malice towards anyone in your heart, you must certainly do it.' He then said: 'O son! This is my Sunnah. The one who loves my Sunnah, loves me. And the one who loves me shall be with me in Paradise.'"

Hastening to offer *salām* is one of the external Sunnahs of Rasūlullāh ﷺ

It is essential to practise on this internal Sunnah [humility] just as it is most rewarding to be able to practise on the external Sunnahs. There is one external Sunnah which is extremely important and essential, i.e. to hasten in offering *salām*. Rasūlullāh ﷺ paid particular attention to this Sunnah. He is described as follows:

يسوق أصحابه ويبدء من لقيه بالسلام

"Rasūlullāh ﷺ would make his companions walk in front of him, and he would be the first in offering *salām*."

A Hadīth states that the person who initiates the *salām* is free from pride. What a simple way to develop humility and servitude! (*Wasīyyatul Akhlāq*)

Now consider another Hadīth in which Rasūlullāh ﷺ advises us to be conscious of our sins while overlooking the faults of others. I am quoting a Hadīth from *Jamʿal Fawā'id*:

مالك، بلغه أن عيسى بن مريم كان يقول لا تكثروا الكلام بغير ذكر الله فتقسو قلوبكم، فإن القلب القاسي بعيد من الله ولكن لا تعلمون، ولا تنظروا في ذنوب الناس كأنكم أرباب، أنظروا في ذنوبكم كأنكم عبيد، فإنما الناس مبتلى ومعافى فارحموا أهل البلاء واحمدوا الله على العافية. (وصية الأخلاق، ص٦٩)

Hadrat ʿĪsā ﷺ used to say: Apart from *dhikr* (remembrance of Allāh ﷻ) do not engage in excessive talking or else your hearts will become hard. And a hard heart is far from Allāh ﷻ but you do not realize this [because the nearness and distance of the heart is a spiritual matter]. Do not look at the sins of people as though you are Allāh (i.e. do not look with pride and haughtiness at the sins of others). Look at your own sins as though you are slaves because people are of two types: those who have fallen in sin, and those who are saved from it. So show compassion to those who are in sin, and thank Allāh ﷻ over your wellness [protection from sin]. (*Wasīyyatul Akhlāq*, p. 69)

This Hadīth not only prohibits us from vexing pride over sinners, but shows the virtue of showing compassion to them. This was the character of the Prophets ﷺ. What right, then, do the followers of Prophets ﷺ have to move away from their path? (*Wasīyyatul Akhlāq*, p. 69)

I [Muhammad Qamar az-Zamān] say: My heart is presently most affected by reading and writing these themes. I fully acknowledge my sins, and I find my heart to be in total conformity with the following verse in which Allāh ﷻ mentions the

condition of the hypocrites, viz. they neither turn to Allāh ﷾ when faced with calamities, nor do they desist from reprehensible actions. This is most regrettable and disappointing.

أَوَلاَ يَرَوْنَ أَنَّهُمْ يُفْتَنُوْنَ فِيْ كُلِّ عَامٍ مَّرَّةً أَوْ مَرَّتَيْنِ ثُمَّ لاَ يَتُوْبُوْنَ وَلاَ هُمْ يَذَّكَّرُوْنَ

"Do they not see that they are put to test every year once or twice? Despite this, they do not repent nor are they admonished." (Sūrah at-Taubah, 9: 126)

'Ārif Rūmī *rahimahullāh* describes this as the wisdom behind the descent of calamities. He says:

"When you see hardships and difficulties befalling you, turn immediately to repentance and seeking forgiveness because they [hardships] are sent by Allāh ﷾ to get you back on track." That is, they have come to cause you to turn your direction towards Allāh ﷾.

Hadrat Khwājah Muhammad Ma'sūm *rahimahullāh* acknowledges his sins

Under the above-quoted verse:

أَوَلاَ يَرَوْنَ أَنَّهُمْ يُفْتَنُوْنَ فِيْ كُلِّ عَامٍ مَّرَّةً أَوْ مَرَّتَيْنِ ثُمَّ لاَ يَتُوْبُوْنَ وَلاَ هُمْ يَذَّكَّرُوْنَ

"Do they not see that they are put to test every year once or twice? Despite this, they do not

repent nor are they admonished.” (Sūrah at-Taubah, 9: 126)

H̲ad̲rat Khwājah Muh̲ammad Maʿs̲ūm Sirhindī *rah̲imahullāh* writes the following with extreme remorse:

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم. بعد الحمد والصلوة وإرسال التحيات...

Unfortunately my life has come to an end and I was unable to do good deeds. The treachery of this world has become clear to me. Trials and tribulations are inundating me one after the other. Friends and dear ones are departing, yet I am not taking any admonition. There is neither repentance nor turning to Allāh ﷻ. My heedlessness is increasing and my sins are multiplying.

أَوَلاَ يَرَوْنَ أَنَّهُمْ يُفْتَنُوْنَ فِيْ كُلِّ عَامٍ مَّرَّةً أَوْ مَرَّتَيْنِ ثُمَّ لاَ يَتُوْبُوْنَ وَلاَ هُمْ يَذَّكَّرُوْنَ

“Do they not see that they are put to test every year once or twice? Despite this, they do not repent nor are they admonished.” (Sūrah at-Taubah, 9: 126)

What kind of *īmān* is this, and what type of a Muslim am I that I am neither adhering to the Qur’ān and Sunnah, nor am I taking admonition from the clear signs of Allāh ﷻ? Ponder over this: Where have the beloveds and friends who were your companions, close associates and colleagues last year and the year before that gone to?

A poet says:

“There is no sign of them, and no one is giving me directions as to where I could find them.”

In other words, the harvest of their life has become totally obliterated, and so, no one can show us directions to them.

اللهم لا تحرمنا أجرهم ولا تفتنا بعدهم

O Allāh! Do not deprive us of their reward, and do not put us through tribulations after them.

It is essential for us and our companions not to spend this short life in heedlessness, and a life of deep sleep. Our hearts should neither become attached to this temporary lodging nor be seduced by this immoral woman. We should rather live in accordance with the pleasures of the True Master [Allāh ﷻ]. We must remain aloof from the plots of Satan and the desires and greed of our soul. We must be mindful of the grave and Resurrection, and consider ourselves among the dead.

وعد نفسك من أصحاب القبور (الحديث)

“Include yourself among the grave dwellers.”

Liberate yourself from this superficial existence and engross yourself in the death which is bound to come. The non-existent which imposes on you and portrays itself as something which is

existent, and the non-entity which pointlessly presents itself as an entity are all worthy of contempt. (*Tarjumah Maktūbāt Khwājah Muhammad Maʿsūm Sirhindī*, p. 264)

Note: Glory to Allāh! Look at the excellent advice of Hadrat Khwājah Muhammad Maʿsūm Sirhindī *rahimahullāh* to himself and his family. It ought to be inscribed on all our hearts, and it is essential on us to practise on it.

After reading such writings to us, Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* used to say: "These writings can instil in Muslims the urge to practise." Hadrat would also speak about the benefits of studying *Maktūbāt Maʿsūmīyyah*. May Allāh ﷻ inspire us to study it and enable us to practise on it. Āmīn.

The sign of a defective person is his not grieving over his condition

Hadrat Hakīm al-Ummat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* has recorded the following in his personal notebook:

"The most harmful thing is the companionship of defective people. In my opinion, a defective person is one who does not grieve over the absence of *kamāl* (perfection) in his life, and has no sorrow over his different conditions. The one who is concerned about this situation is heading in the direction of *kamāl*. Even though he is not a *kāmil* person, there is no harm in his companionship."

Hadrat Muslihul Ummat Maulānā Shāh Wasīyyullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* used to read the above to us and say: "The companionship of such a defective person is harmful because the bad luck of his companionship would cause the person to become heedless of his own rectification (*islāh*) and be devoid of the desire to acquire *kamāl*. As for the defective person who acknowledges his faults and is concerned about reaching *kamāl*, then anyone who remains in his company will also perceive his own defects and faults, and this person will thus become a means to his reaching *kamāl*.

Hadrat Hakīm al-Ummat's *rahimahullāh* advice to Maulānā Sayyid Sulaymān Nadwī *rahimahullāh*

My heart now desires to quote Hadrat Hakīm al-Ummat's *rahimahullāh* advice to Maulānā Sayyid Sulaymān Nadwī *rahimahullāh*. This advice was published in the monthly journal, *al-Qāsim*, which is under the editorship of Hadrat Maulānā ʿAbd al-Qayyūm Sāhib Haqqānī. A special issue on the life of Hadrat Maulānā Sayyid Sulaymān Nadwī *rahimahullāh* was published. The editor quoted this special advice on the authority of a certain doctor. I consider it most heart-rending and admonitory for all of us. It is as follows:

"The Doctor Sāhib said: Hadrat Sayyid [Sulaymān Nadwī] Sāhib *rahimahullāh* came to the *khānqāh* in Thānabhawan on one occasion. Hadrat [Thānwī] *rahimahullāh* was conducting a special

majlis. Sayyid Sāhib was seated right next to Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī *rahimahullāh*. Sayyid Sāhib whispered something into Hadrat's ears. After a period of silence, Hadrat said something in Sayyid Sāhib's ears. We could not hear this exchange of words, but we suddenly saw Sayyid Sāhib crying and sobbing to the extent of gasping for breath. Sayyid Sāhib then departed. The entire assembly was astounded and at a loss as to what transpired. But no one had the courage to ask Hadrat. After quite some time, Hadrat Khwājah Sāhib (Khwājah ʿAzīz al-Hasan Sāhib Ghaurī Majdhūb) took the courage and asked Hadrat. Hadrat Hakīm al-Ummat *rahimahullāh* related the conversation to him. Hadrat Khwājah Sāhib related the incident in *Ashraf as-Sawānih* [the biography of Hadrat Thānwī *rahimahullāh*] without mentioning the name [of Sayyid Sāhib]. The incident is penned as follows:

"A famous Nadwī scholar came to visit Hadrat Wālā *rahimahullāh* for a few hours. At the time of his departure, he said to Hadrat: 'Give me some advice.' Hadrat Wālā relates: 'I was hesitant and was not sure what advice I could give to such a great scholar. Allāh سبحانه وتعالى immediately instilled a theme in my heart, which in retrospect I can say was totally suited to him.' (These are the words of the Shaykh ash-Shuyūkh. Every word is immersed in the effect of *ʿabdīyyat* (servitude), and is teaching the lesson of *ʿabdīyyat*). 'I [Hadrat Thānwī *rahimahullāh* is speaking] said: 'Hadrat, what advice can I give to a great person like you? However, I will present to you the essence of the

T̲arīqah as I understood it in my entire life.’ (Look at how H̲ad̲rat Wālā took full consideration of the position and greatness of the one who sought his advice). ‘The essence of the T̲arīqah as I understand it is *fanā wa ʿabdīyyat* (self-effacement and servitude). One must obliterate one’s self as much as one can. All the spiritual practices, exercises, and striving are done with this object in mind. One’s entire life must be spent in acquiring *fanā wa ʿabdīyyat.*’ H̲ad̲rat’s statement had such an effect on him that he was not only reduced to tears, but began sobbing.” (*Ashraf as-Sawāniḫ*, vol. 2, p. 218, published by Idārah Ta’līfāt Ashrafīyyah, Thānabhawan, district Muz̲affarnagar)

The purpose of *pīrī murīdī* (shaykh/murīd relationship) is to acquire self-effacement

H̲ad̲rat Khwājah Muh̲ammad Maʿs̲ūm Sirhindī *rah̲imahullāh* says the following in explaining the purpose of *sulūk*:

The object of *sulūk* is not to merely become a shaykh, or to make people your *murīds*. Rather, a person has to fulfil the demands of servitude in a manner which removes the adulteration and interference of the *nafs*. In this way, the purpose of the T̲arīqah is to acquire obliteration and anonymity, and get rid off rebellion and dogmatism. The acquisition of *maʿrifat* (true recognition of Allāh ﷻ) is dependent on this.” (*Maktūbāt Maʿs̲ūmīyyah*)

Note: Tell me, what wrong is there in such *pīrī/murīdī* whose objective is the fulfilment of servitude [to Allāh ﷻ] and the removal of the self-ego of the *nafs*? This is why the removal of evil qualities and traits is known as *tazkiyah-e-nafs* (purification of the self), and this is mentioned in the Qur'ān and Hadīth.

I now quote a story which Hadrat Muslihul Ummat Maulānā Shāh Wasīyyullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* used to relate with real emotion and passion.

Hadrat Sayyid Nūr Muhammad Badāyūnī *rahimahullāh* fears the questioning of Allāh ﷻ

Hadrat Qādī Thanā'ullāh Sāhib Pānīpattī *rahimahullāh* relates in *Tuhfatus Sālikīn*:

Hadrat Mirzā Mazhar Jān Jānā *rahimahullāh* relates with regard to his shaykh, Hadrat Sayyid Nūr Muhammad Badāyūnī *rahimahullāh*: A person made a self-claim of being Hadrat's *murīd* [although he was not his *murīd*]. This person came one day and spoke to Hadrat in a very harsh and disrespectful way. Hadrat did not say anything in reply. The person came the next day to acquire benefit from Hadrat's company and words of wisdom. But I wanted to punish him. Hadrat prohibited me from saying or doing anything to him, and accorded him the same attention as he did to his sincere *murīds*. I felt quite perturbed by this. I went to Hadrat and

asked him the reason for according him the same attention as the other sincere *murīds*. Hadrat said: “Mirzā Sāhib! Had I punished and rebuked him, and did not pay any attention to him, Allāh ﷾ would have questioned me saying: ‘I placed the light of *amānat* (trust) in your bosom. One of My servants came in search of this light, why did you deny it to him?’ What reply would I have given to Allāh ﷾? Could I tell Him: ‘O Allāh! He swore me and hurled abuses at me, that is why I denied him.’ Would this reply be accepted [by Allāh ﷾]?”

I remained silent for a few days, still perturbed by the person’s attitude. Hadrat said to me: “O child! Although I may have accorded him the same attention as I did to my sincere *murīds*, has Allāh ﷾ ever considered and hypocrite to be equal to a sincere Muslim?”

وَاللّٰهُ يَعْلَمُ الْمُفْسِدَ مِنَ الْمُصْلِحِ

“Allāh knows those who lay things to waste and those who set matters right.” (Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2: 220)

The real situation and condition is in Allāh’s control. Allāh’s bestowal only reaches those who are sincere and respectful” (*Tarjumah Irshād at-Tālibīn*, p. 140, *Aqwāl-e-Salaf*, vol. 3, p. 252)

Note: Just ponder! A *murīd* was disrespectful to Hadrat Shaykh and hurled abuses at him. To bear these insults was an act of extreme pardon, forbearance, humility and self-effacement. Then

when the person sought Hadrat's attention, he accorded this abusive *murīd* the same attention as he did to his sincere *murīds*. This certainly points to the high level of his character and open-heartedness.

At the same time, it also points to his absolute fear of Allāh ﷾. He feared what answer he would give to Allāh ﷾ on the day of Resurrection when He questions him about it. Very well, this was Hadrat Shaykh Nūr Muhammad Badāyūnī's *rahimahullāh* magnanimity and fear of Allāh ﷾.

Now look at it from another angle: What a shameful, reprehensible and wretched thing this *murīd* did! He became a *murīd* of a great personality, but when he experienced something against his nature and temperament, he left no stone unturned in showing disrespect to his shaykh and acting audaciously towards him. We seek refuge in Allāh ﷾.

Ponder! Can this not happen today? According to my limited understanding, I can say that this is happening today as well. People stay for years in the company of a *kāmil* shaykh, yet their disrespect and rudeness will render an observer astounded. A person spends lengthy periods of time with a shaykh, but he neither obtains *maʿrifat* of the shaykh nor of the Tarīqah.

My shaykh, Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Ahmad Sāhib *rahimahullāh* conveys this in the following couplet:

"O Ahmad! I have neither recognized nor understood you all my life, although we are going to and fro together."

Hadrat Muslihul Ummat Maulānā Shāh Wasīyyullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* would constantly relate the above story to us for our own admonition. He would also relate another story with much emotion and passion. We are quoting it from *Nafahāt al-Uns* of Hadrat Shaykh ʿAbd ar-Rahmān Jāmī *rahimahullāh*.

The insight of Hadrat Khwājah ʿAbd al-Khāliq Gajdawānī *rahimahullāh*

A large number of people were present before him on the day of ʿĀshūrā'. The discussion revolved around *maʿrifat* and *haqīqat*. A youngster who had the appearance of ascetics entered. He had a cloth under his arm and a *musallā* (prayer mat) on his head. The youngster entered and sat in one corner. Khwājah Sāhib *rahimahullāh* looked in his direction once, and after a while, the youngster stood up and said: "O Khwājah! Hadrat Rasūlullāh ﷺ said:

اتقوا فراسة المؤمن فإنه ينظر بنور الله

"Be fearful of the insight of a believer, for surely he looks with Allāh-bestowed light."

[The youth continues]: "Tell me, what is the wisdom behind this statement?" Khwājah Sāhib *rahimahullāh* said: "The wisdom behind this

statement is that you must cut off the *zunnār* (a rosary worn by Hindus) and throw it away. And you must accept *īmān*." The youngster said: "Allāh forbid, how can I have a *zunnār*?" Hadrat Khwājah Sāhib asked one of his attendants to go to the youngster and remove the cloth which was at his side. When it was removed, a *zunnār* was seen beneath it. The youngster cut it off immediately and embraced *īmān*.

Hadrat 'Abd ar-Rahmān Jāmī *rahimahullāh* continues:

"Khwājah Sāhib turned to his companions and said: 'O my beloveds! Come, let us all emulate this youngster, cut off our own *zunnārs*, and embrace *īmān*. This youngster cut off his physical *zunnār*, now let us cut off our internal *zunnārs* known as ostentation and self-conceit so that we are also forgiven like this youngster.' After hearing this speech, a strange condition pervaded all who were present. They all fell at Khwājah Sāhib's feet and renewed their repentance.

The above incident (or it could be a different incident) has been related by 'Allāmah Ibn Qayyim *rahimahullāh* in *Madārij as-Sālikīn*, vol. 2, p. 485.

The insight of Hadrat Sayyid at-Tā'ifah Junayd Baghdādī *rahimahullāh*

وكان الجنيد يوما يتكلم على الناس فوقف عليه شاب نصراني متنكرا فقال أيها الشيخ، ما معنى قول النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم: "اتقوا فراسة المؤمن فإنه ينظر بنور الله." فأطرق الجنيد ثم رفع رأسه إليه وقال أسلم فقد حان وقت إسلامك، فأسلم الغلام. (مدارج السالكين، ج٢، ص٤٨٥)

Al-Junayd *rahimahullāh* was addressing the people one day when a Christian youngster who was a complete stranger entered. He said: "O Shaykh! What is the meaning of the Prophet's ﷺ statement: 'Be fearful of the far-sightedness of a believer, for surely he looks with Allāh-bestowed light.'?" Hadrat Junayd *rahimahullāh* lowered his head, then raised it and said: "Embrace Islam, the time has come for you to embrace Islam." The youngster embraced Islam there and then.

'Allāmah Ibn al-Qayyim *rahimahullāh* continues:

كان الصديق رضي الله عنه أعظم الأمة فراسة وبعده عمر بن الخطاب رضي الله عنه، ووقائع فراسته مشهورة.

Hadrat Abū Bakr ﷺ possessed the most insight in the *ummah*. He is followed by Hadrat 'Umar ibn al-Khattāb ﷺ. Incidents depicting his insight are well known.

The insight of Hadrat ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān ﵁

وكذلك عثمان بن عفان رضي الله عنه صادق الفراسة، وقال أنس بن مالك رضي الله عنه: "دخلت على عثمان بن عفان رضي الله عنه وكنت رأيت امرأة في الطريق تأملت محاسنها. فقال عثمان بن عفان رضي الله عنه: يدخل علي أحدكم وأثر الزنا ظاهر في عينيه. فقلت: أوحي بعد رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم؟ فقال: ولكن تبصرة وبرهان وفراسة صادقة. (مدارج السالكين، ج٢، ص٤٨٦)

Similar was the case with Hadrat ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān ﵁. He was genuine in his farsightedness. Hadrat Anas ibn Mālik ﵁ relates: "I went to visit Hadrat ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān ﵁. On the way I saw a woman whose beauty and appearance I observed deeply." Hadrat ʿUthmān ﵁ said: "Some of you people come to me in whose eyes the effects of adultery are obvious." I said: "Is divine revelation still coming down after the departure of Rasūlullāh ﷺ!?" He replied: "No. rather, it is insight, evidence, and genuine insight." (*Madārij as-Sālikīn*, vol. 2, p. 486)

My heart now desires to quote a few statements of our pious elders on the subject of insight as mentioned in *Madārik as-Sālikīn*. I am quoting them so that we may understand this subject more clearly, we may develop an urge to acquire this quality, and this may be a means to acquiring it. It is certainly not difficult for Allāh ﷻ.

ʿAllāmah Ibn Qayyim al-Jauzīyyah *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* writes:

There are three types of *firāsat* (insight). One of them is *firāsat-e-īmānī*, whose cause and essence is:

وسببها نور يقذفه الله في قلب عبده يفرق به بين الحق والباطل والحالي والعاطل والصادق والكاذب. (مدارج السالكين، ص٤٨٤).

The cause of *firāsat* is the light which Allāh ﷻ casts into the hearts of His servants through which they are able to differentiate between the truth and falsehood, a person who has control over his condition and the one who is devoid of it, and the one who is genuine and the one who is not.

وحقيقتها أنها خاطر يهجم على القلب ينفي ما يضاده.

Its essence is the predominance of a condition over the heart which rejects anything which is contrary to that condition.

قال أبو سعيد الخراز من نظر بنور الفراسة نظر بنور الحق وتكون مواد علمه مع الحق بلا سهو ولا غفلة بل حكم حق جرى على لسان عبده. وقال الداراني: الفراسة مكاشفة النفس ومعاينة الغيب وهي من مقامات الإيمان.

<u>H</u>a<u>d</u>rat Abū Saʿīd al-Kharrāz *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* said: “The one who looks with the light of *firāsat* is actually looking with the light of Allāh ﷻ. His

intellectual discussions will be correct without forgetting and overlooking. In fact, the true and correct decisions will be uttered by this servant of Allāh ﷻ."

'Allāmah Dārānī *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* said: "*Firāsat* entails the exposition of conditions to the heart and the ability to see the unseen. It is one of the lofty levels of *īmān*."

Essential deeds for the acquisition of insight

وقال عمرو بن نجيد: كان شاه الكرماني حاد الفراسة لا يخطئ ويقول من غض بصره عن المحارم وأمسك نفسه عن الشهوات وعمر باطنه بالمراقبة وظاهره باتباع السنة وتعوّد أكل الحلال لم تخطئ فراسته. (مدارج السالكين، ص٤٨٤)

'Amr ibn Nujayd said: "Shāh Kurmānī had a sharp insight, and he would not err in this regard. He used to say: 'The person who lowers his gaze from looking at the unlawful, restrains his self from desires, embellishes his internal self with *murāqabah* (meditation) and his external self with emulating the Sunnah, and habituates himself to eating what is lawful, his *firāsat* will not err.'"

<u>Note</u>: Obviously, all these deeds and etiquette are corroborated from the Sharī'ah and Sunnah. If a person emulates them, *inshā Allāh*, he will certainly acquire spiritual benefits. There is a famous saying:

الأحوال ثمرات الأعمال

"Lofty conditions are the fruits of deeds."

At the same time, a person has to persist in making *du'ā'* to Allāh ﷻ and begging Him to bestow him with the light of *īmān*, and genuine *firāsat*. All these internal things, such as *firāsat*, light, effulgence, etc. are bestowals from Allāh ﷻ. When a person adopts their causes, Allāh ﷻ bestows him with their fruits through His grace and kindness. This is why we have to give particular attention to them.

The humility and servitude of Hadrat Shaykh Sayf ad-Dīn, the father of Shaykh 'Abd al-Haqq *rahimahullāh*

Hadrat 'Abd al-Haqq Muhaddith Dehlawī *rahimahullāh* writes:

"My father used to say: 'I do not have the inspiration to carry out optional and desirable acts (*nawāfil* and *mustahabbāt*) which the *sālikīn* (those treading the path of *sulūk*) are embellished with. Yes, I certainly possess the qualities of humility, self-effacement, remorse, and regret – provided Allāh ﷻ accepts these qualities from me.'"

Note: The qualities of humility, self-effacement, remorse and regret are most certainly not an insignificant treasure. They hold a high value in Allāh's sight. Hadrat Sayyidunā Ahmad Rifā'ī

said: “There is no difficult path whose veils I did not uncover, and whose sails I did not raise with the hands of courage. I tried reaching Allāh ﷻ from every door, but I found a large crowd at every door. I then reached the door of humility and servitude. I found it empty and found my objective from it, while the other seekers where still waiting at the different doors.” (*al-Bunyān al-Mushayyad*, p. 136)

He says at another place:

“O elders! The different groups of Sufis have become divided into different parties. But this unworthy Ahmad will remain with those who have humbled themselves with servitude, poverty and restlessness.”

هنيئا لأرباب النعيم نعيمهم – وللعاشق المسكين ما يتجرع

“May those who possess treasures enjoy them. As for the poor lover, he has to swallow a bitter drink.”

Such was his condition: If anyone wanted to treat him for the protection of his health and removal of his illness, he would not adhere to their treatment. He would say: “What deeds am I doing that I should bother about my protection? It is the same whether I live or die.” He was so overcome by the fear of Allāh ﷻ, that he would accomplish it in the shortest time.

He used to say: “I do not see anything in myself which I could consider good enough for my salvation in the Hereafter.” He would then burst out crying.

Note: Glory to Allāh! Look at his humility and fear of the Hereafter.

He used to say: “Whenever I think of Allāh’s greatness and independence, I consider my acts of obedience to be worthless. Allāh ﷻ alone knows what my end will be, and how I will cross the final stage.” When he used to read the Qur’ān at home, he would lower his voice when reading verses which mention Allāh’s warnings. If such verses were read with a loud voice, and his voice fell in his ears, he would be reduced to tears and lose control over his self. When he read verses containing Allāh’s promises and mercy in a loud voice, he would experience joy and be invigorated. Prior to his death, he composed a few lines of poetry on the subject of pardon and forgiveness, and requested for them to be placed in his *kafan* (shroud). The following four lines are from this composition.

“I am a person whose heart is grief-stricken. Pardon me, and do not take me to account. A hundred traps are lying in wait for me. So pardon me and do not question me. If I am questioned about my deeds, I will be ashamed. O the Most Kind of those who show kindness! Forgive me and do not take me to account.”

He also composed the following couplets:

قدمت على الكريم بغير زاد – من الحسنات والقلب السليم

فحمل الزاد أقبح كل شيء – إذا كان القدوم على الكريم

"I have presented myself before the Affectionate [Allāh] without any provision of good deeds and without a sound heart, because it is the worst of things to present one's self before the Affectionate with provisions." (*Aqwāl-e-Salaf*, vol. 3, p. 88)

The humility and self-effacement of Khwājah Bahā' ad-Dīn Naqshband, and his quest for Allāh's mercy

Khwājah Bahā' ad-Dīn Naqshband used to turn to Allāh ﷻ and say these lines:

"O Allāh! I have presented myself in Your court as a bankrupt person. Kindly bestow me a little of Your beauty. Extend Your generous hand towards my purse, Your hand is filled with blessings." (*Nafahāt al-Uns*)

I am now quoting some of the sayings and words of advice of 'Ārif Billāh Ibrāhīm Dasūqī Qurashī *rahimahullāh* from volume two of *Aqwāl-e-Salaf*.

Practise on words of advice; there is no benefit in showing off your letter of permission

He used to say: O my children! Adopt the character of the *auliyā'* so that you may succeed. If you merely obtain a letter of permission (when the shaykh gives permission to his *murīd* to induct other *murīds*, when the shaykh appoints him as a *khalīfah*) without adopting their character, and you merely show off your letter when someone reprimands you, then listen well: this is nothing, it is merely *nafsānīyyat* (self-ego and self-conceit). Yes, you ought to study the letter of permission carefully, and practise on the words of advice which it contains so that you benefit from them, and you may be blessed with righteousness."

"O children! This has always been the way of reaching the ranks of the *Auliyā'*, and this will be the way until the Resurrection."

Note: Glory to Allāh! What excellent advice. If only those who obtained permission from the *mashā'ikh* could be cognizant of it so that it benefited themselves and others as well.

He used to say: "The person who does not have affection for Allāh's creation cannot reach the rank of the *Ahlullāh*. When Hadrat Mūsā ﷺ used to tend to sheep, he neither killed any of them, left them hungry, nor caused any other harm to them. When Allāh ﷻ observed his extreme

kindness, He appointed him as His Prophet, engaged in conversations with him, and appointed him to supervise the Banī Isrā'īl. Thus, anyone who shows respect to Allāh's creation and treats them with affection, he will progress to the ranks of the *Auliyā'*."

He used to say: "The shaykh is a physician for his *murīd*. And so, when the patient does not follow the guidelines and advice of his physician, he will not be cured."

He used to say: "The body has three parts: (1) the heart, (2) the tongue, (3) the rest of the body parts. Angels are appointed over the tongue and other body parts, while the heart is under Allāh's supervision.

He used to say: "If you are genuine children and sincere followers, become sincere servants of Allāh ﷻ. Make your hearts your admonishers, practise to the full, and do not hanker after the wealth of others. This is my way. The person who has genuine love for me will follow my way. The true *sālik* is the one who follows this way."

He used to say: "O my children! Even if you fast forever, engage in worship throughout the night, your heart is pure, and your affairs are upright with sincerity; even then you must not claim any *kamāl* (perfection) for yourself. Instead, you should only say: 'I am a sinner and a worthless person.' Be on constant guard against the evil

and deception of the *nafs* because many Sufis were destroyed by it."

He used to say: "O my children! If you want to backbite anyone, then backbite your parents because they are more eligible for your good deeds."

He used to say: "How can any of you claim to be righteous when you commit evils!? You collect unjust taxes, give bribes, devour interest, and you eat food at the houses of tyrants and those who support tyrants. How, then, can you make claims of piety!? How can you hope to be recorded as a *s̲ādiq*, *walī* and beloved in Allāh's register when you are immersed in such evils!? To make matters worse, you have not even repented as yet! How can you make claims to the T̲arīqah and induct others to repent!?"

He used to say: "It is *wājib* on the bearer of the Qur'ān not to fill his stomach with *h̲arām* food and cover his body with *h̲arām* clothes. If he does this, the Qur'ān will curse him from within and say: 'May Allāh ﷻ curse the one who did not show respect to His speech.'"

He used to say: "O my children! Be cautious of the evils of those who frequent you. If you see any harshness in your brother, be affectionate towards him and protect yourself from his harm. As for your friend, you must give due consideration to him if he upholds the friendship. O my children! The truth is that now a person

has no alternative but to be on his guard from everyone. This is because we are in an era wherein desiring good has decreased. It will be very rare for you to meet someone who desires your good, and is concerned about your well-being. Remain very far from those whose happiness you desire while they harbour ill for you, you desire to elevate them while they want to keep you subdued. At present there are people who will be bad to you if you do not do good to them. In fact, there are many who will treat you badly even if you treat them well. No matter how much kindness and affection you show them, they will respond with tyranny and oppression. You will convey benefit to them, but they will cause harm to you. You will desire their well-being, but they will be bent on repulsing you. You will want to bond with them, but they will sever ties from you. You will feed them, but they will deprive you. You will urge them forward, but they will push you to the back at the first opportunity. Those whom you nurtured and tutored will claim to have nurtured and tutored you. You will be very clear in your dealing with them, but they will respond with treachery. You will meet them with a smiling mien, but they will respond with a frown. Such is the world."

"O people of the world! Just ponder! When hypocrisy was found during the era of Rasūlullāh ﷺ, how can the seventh century [we are now in the fourteenth century of the Islamic calendar] be free of it!? My dear children! This is why I am telling you to keep away from evil people, and

acquire piety from the pious.” (<u>*T*</u>*abaqāt*, vol. 1, p. 156, *Aqwāl-e-Salaf*, vol. 2, p. 168)

<u>Note</u>: <u>H</u>a<u>d</u>rat Shaykh *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* described the condition of his era to his *murīds* and associates. He advised them to be on the guard from everyone. Our present age is even more filled with tribulations and evils. It is therefore necessary for us to be even more on our guard.

The need to respect the pious predecessors and to acknowledge their services

In his book, *Qur’ānī Ifādāt*, <u>H</u>a<u>d</u>rat Maulānā Abul <u>H</u>asan ‘Alī Miyā Nadwī *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* speaks about the need to be on our guard against the trials and tribulations of the present age. He writes:

وَالَّذِيْنَ جَاءُوْا مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ يَقُوْلُوْنَ رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لَنَا وَلِإِخْوَانِنَا الَّذِيْنَ سَبَقُوْنَا بِالإِيْمَانِ وَلاَ تَجْعَلْ فِيْ قُلُوْبِنَا غِلاًّ لِّلَّذِيْنَ آمَنُوْا رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ رَؤُفٌ رَّحِيْمٌ.

“Those who came after them say: ‘O our Lord! Forgive us and our brothers who have preceded us in Faith, and put not in our hearts any hatred against those who have believed. O our Lord! You are certainly most kind, most merciful.’” (Sūrah al-<u>H</u>ashr, verse 10)

In the above verse, the forthcoming generations of Muslims are asked to have good thoughts about and to acknowledge their previous generations. The truthfulness, devotion, obedience to Allāh ﷻ,

fear and turning to Allāh, services to *Dīn* and protection of the borders and forts of Islam in which they were at the forefront should be acknowledged from the heart by the latter generations. The new generations should bear no malice or hatred towards them. They should experience no hesitance or problem in acknowledging their services. Their tongues should always make *duʿā’* for them and always sing their praises. They should accept their shortcomings and constraints, and overlook their omissions - omissions from which no human is free.

The reason for all this is that the person who engages in *ijtihād* can err and can also be correct. The fear of falling down is only possible in favour of the one who tries to walk and run. Apart from this, it is an accepted reality that apart from the teachings and guidance of Rasūlullāh ﷺ, there is the possibility of accepting or rejecting the rules and teachings of all other people.

A very important necessity of *daʿwah* and *tablīgh*, the personality of Rasūlullāh ﷺ and in order to prove the greatness of his life, it is extremely necessary to acknowledge the great contribution of the Sahābah ؓ. We should make manifest the greatness and importance of their feats, their loyalty [to Rasūlullāh ﷺ], and their mutual love and cooperation in the path of truth. We should present the luminous pages of this glowing history to the world. Their mistakes and human shortcomings do not even amount to a small black spot on the clear and pure pages of history.

Rational philosophy and a sound mind also accept this stand. This is also established from the Qur'ān and reliable Traditions. Even the Qur'ān considers such a stand concerning the pious predecessors to be worthy of praise. Allāh says:

وَالَّذِيْنَ جَاءُوْا مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ يَقُوْلُوْنَ رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لَنَا وَلِإِخْوَانِنَا الَّذِيْنَ سَبَقُوْنَا بِالْإِيْمَانِ وَلاَ تَجْعَلْ فِيْ قُلُوْبِنَا غِلاًّ لِّلَّذِيْنَ آمَنُوْا رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ رَؤُفٌ رَّحِيْمٌ.

"Those who came after them say: 'O our Lord! Forgive us and our brothers who have preceded us in Faith, and put not in our hearts any hatred against those who have believed. O our Lord! You are certainly most kind, most merciful.'" (Sūrah al-Hashr, verse 10)

This verse demands of us to be extremely cautious when deciding to pass any judgement or having any opinion about the pious predecessors, righteous imams and leaders. This verse also asks us not to display any haste or impulsive emotions concerning them. As long as we are not fully satisfied concerning a particular matter, we should abstain from passing any definite judgement concerning it.

At times a person adopts this way of thinking that if someone did not endeavour to establish an Islamic state, then it is as if he has done nothing - irrespective of whether he is Shaykh ʿAbd al-Qādir Jīlānī *rahimahullāh*, Mujaddid Alf Thānī *rahimahullāh* or Shāh Walī Allāh *rahimahullāh*. This is actually a result of a superficial study of

history. [On the contrary], everyone has made a contribution: the scholars of Hadīth, the jurists, the reformers of the *ummah*, the *auliyā'* of Allāh - all of them have made a contribution.

If someone says: "What did Imām Abū Hanīfah *rahimahullāh* do? [He did nothing]. He merely taught the rules of salāh and fasting. He ought to have established an Islamic caliphate and an Islamic state." You should remember that a caliphate will be established [whether you like it or not]. But who will teach you how to offer your salāh? And what benefit is there in a caliphate when no one knows how to offer salāh?

This misconception should never enter your heart that all the past scholars were defective, none of them understood Islam, and none of them tried to establish Islam in its totality. You should bear in mind that all scholars of the past were engaged in the service and protection of Islam in accordance with their capability [and the means available to them]. Some were engaged in admonition, some in delivering lectures, some were teaching Hadīth, some were issuing fatwās, some were writing books. They were all serving Islam and guiding the Muslims in their respective fields. Each of them was safeguarding a particular front [of Islam].

Never ever be under this misconception that some people have correctly understood Islam only now and that no one understood Islam completely before this. This is a great accusation against Islam. It is a huge taint against the capability of

Islam. This would cause doubts on the Qur'ānic life, the clarity of the Qur'ān and its being clearly understood as established from verses like "a Book in a clear Arabic language" and "a clear Arabic tongue".

Moreover, if someone claims that the Qur'ān was not correctly understood for the last 1400 years, can we believe that it has been understood now? The fundamental principles of Islam, the facts of the Qur'ān and the absolute truths of *Dîn* have been coming down to us through an uninterrupted chain. If someone feels that these things were not understood for quite some time, it is his short-sightedness. He will not be able to prove even a single thing to be completely forgotten [or abandoned] by the world of Islam. Shaykhul Islam Ibn Taymīyyah *rahimahullāh* went to the extent in stating that there isn't even a single *Sunnah* [of Rasūlullāh ﷺ] which has been completely raised [or has completely disappeared] from the world of Islam. If it is not found [practised upon] in one corner of the Muslim world, it is certainly found in another part of the Muslim world.

You should therefore have good thoughts about our past scholars. In this there is great protection of your *īmān*. You should always make *du'ā'* for them:

رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لَنَا وَلِإِخْوَانِنَا الَّذِيْنَ سَبَقُوْنَا بِالإِيْمَانِ وَلاَ تَجْعَلْ فِيْ قُلُوْبِنَا غِلاًّ لِّلَّذِيْنَ آمَنُوْا رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ رَؤُفٌ رَّحِيْمٌ.

"O our Lord! Forgive us and our brothers who have preceded us in Faith, and put not in our hearts any hatred against those who have believed. O our Lord! You are certainly most kind, most merciful." (Sūrah al-Hashr, verse 10)

I now take the opportunity of quoting certain parts from the introduction to the book, *Tārīkh Daʿwat wa ʿAzīmat.* This book is the famous work of Mufakkir Islam Hadrat Maulānā Abul Hasan ʿAlī Miyā Nadwī *rahimahullāh* in which he demonstrates the continues arrival of reformers, propagators, and erudite *ʿulamā'*. He proves from history that there was no era which was devoid of reformers.

A new personality and a new force for every new tribulation and danger

"No one can deny the fact that during this lengthy and eventful history of Islam, there was not even the shortest period of time when the true call of Islam had ceased completely, when the reality of Islam was hidden behind a veil, when the Islamic *ummah* had become totally comatose, and darkness pervaded the entire Islamic world. This is a fact of history: When any tribulation raised its head against Islam, when any effort was made to distort and obliterate it, when it was portrayed in an incorrect manner, and when it was severely attacked by materialism – then a powerful personality most definitely came onto the field to combat this tribulation with full force, and defeated it."

“There are many ideologies and movements which were very powerful in their times. But their existence remains only in books today, and it has become difficult to even understand their essence. Who is there today who fully understands the details about the Qadarīyyah, Jahmīyyah, Muʿtazilah, those who believed that the Qur’ān was a creation of Allāh, those who believed in *wah̲datul wujūd* (unity in existence), in the *dīn-e-ilāhī* of Akbar, etc.? Whereas these were powerful and influential ideologies in their times. Some of them were backed by mighty kingdoms, and some very intelligent and erudite scholars of their times held such beliefs and were at their forefront. But the reality of Islam eventually vanquished them all. After some time, these living movements and official religions were reduced to academic discussions which are preserved only in the books of scholastic theology (*ʿilm al-kalām*) and the histories of ideologies.”

“Efforts to preserve the *Dīn*, endeavours to revive it, and the system of *daʿwah* and *is̲lāh̲* (rectification, reformation) are as old as Islam itself, and as continuous as the life of the Muslims.”

H̲ad̲rat Maulānā Abul H̲asan ʿAlī Miyā Nadwī *rah̲imahullāh* then highlights the manifold services of our pious predecessors under the heading, *The legacy of Islam.* He says:

“A full share in this legacy is enjoyed by every person who established a rule on the system of

the caliphate during any period of Islam; combated ignorance and materialism; called towards Islam; emulated the Prophets ﵈ in inviting, reminding, warning, and giving glad tidings; who, through his wise *daʿwah* and sincere love, was able to subdue the enemy who could not be subdued by the sword and dagger; who, through the strength of his *īmān* and spiritual power, brought such people into the fold of Islam and bestowed the honour of servitude to Muhammad ﷺ; who, through their powerful literature and heart-rending and eloquent poetry, enslaved the minds of those who were not convinced by academic investigations and sectarian philosophies."

"This is an entire sequence and each personality enjoys a special share and rank. History, in essence, entails the fulfilment of a trust, desire for the truth, and acknowledging realities. Each one of them was a guard on one of the Islamic borders, and each one was a valuable arrow from the quiver of Islam. Had these personalities not undertaken these sincere endeavours, we would not have found this treasure house in our close examination of history. This treasure house has the full means for our honour, admonition and lesson. In the presence of such a treasure house, we can raise our heads high before the different nations of the world.

"The author [Hadrat Maulānā Abul Hasan ʿAlī Nadwī *rahimahullāh* is referring to himself] has a balanced and just approach in this field. He has

tried to present a picture of those important personalities who rendered sterling services in the fields of *daʿwah*, resoluteness in purpose, reformation and revival. All inspiration is from Allāh ﷻ alone." (*Tārīkh Daʿwat wa ʿAzīmat*)

This insignificant servant says – not only out of his belief but on the basis of facts – that the following personalities of the latter era are included in the golden beads of this golden chain. They are: Hujjatul Islam Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Qāsim Sāhib Nānautwī *rahimahullāh* – the founder of Dār al-ʿUlūm Deoband, Hadrat Qutb al-ʿĀlam Maulānā Rashīd Ahmad Sāhib Gangohī *rahimahullāh*, Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad ʿAlī Maungerī *rahimahullāh* – the founder of Dār al-ʿUlūm Nadwatul ʿUlamā' Lucknow, Hadrat Shaykh al-Hind Maulānā Mahmūd al-Hasan Sāhib Deobandī *rahimahullāh*, Hadrat Hakīm al-Ummat Mujaddid al-Millat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Sāhib Thānwī *rahimahullāh*, Hadrat Ra'īs at-Tablīgh Maulānā Muhammad Ilyās Sāhib Kāndhlawī *rahimahullāh*, Hadrat Imām Ahl-e-Sunnat Maulānā ʿAbd ash-Shakūr Sāhib Lucknowī *rahimahullāh*, Hadrat Muslihul Ummat Maulānā Shāh Wasīyyullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh*,[1] Hadrat Shaykh al-Hadīth Maulānā

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[1] Hadrat Maulānā Abul Hasan ʿAlī Miyā Nadwī *rahimahullāh* went to visit Hadrat Muslihul Ummat Maulānā Shāh Wasīyyullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* on one occasion. He describes his impressions of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* in his book, *Purāne Chirāgh*. I am quoting one paragraph from it:

Muhammad Zakarīyyā Sāhib, and Mufakkir-e-Islam Hadrat Maulānā Abul Hasan ʿAlī Miyā Nadwī *rahimahullāh*, and others like them.

Every one of these personalities served the *Dīn* in different fields, and left their mark in this world. *Inshā Allāh,* they will be bestowed with special honour and rank in the Hereafter.

It is essential for us to safeguard ourselves from belittling, scorning, and denying the sincere *Dīnī* services of such reformers of the *ummah* and erudite *ʿulamā'* so that we may be protected against Allāh's wrath and punishment. Inspiration is from Allāh ﷻ alone.

"On seeing the Maulānā's restlessness and agitation, I spontaneously thought of Maulānā Muhammad Ilyās Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. He had the same lean appearance, the same informality in speech, the same independence when addressing someone, the same stuttering in speech like that of Hadrat Mūsā ﷺ, the same predominance of *daʿwah*, the same silence which is engrossed in thought, and the same quivering speech. Although there was a definite difference in them on the subject of *daʿwah*, he was the same as Hadrat Maulānā Ilyās Sāhib *rahimahullāh* in his subject of love for Allāh ﷻ and concern for his responsibilities. I had the opportunity of attending his morning and evening assemblies. There was a captivating feeling, while at the same time, an absolute balance between the intellect and *sulūk*. He would occasionally hold some of his devoted attendants by their heads and shake them, and direct their attention towards an important and necessary point."

Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* advises his people against pride and corruption

Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* said to me: "Read this verse to those who are coming from their respective hometowns:

تِلْكَ الدَّارُ الآخِرَةُ نَجْعَلُهَا لِلَّذِيْنَ لاَ يُرِيْدُوْنَ عُلُوًّا فِي الأَرْضِ وَلاَ فَسَادًا، وَالْعَاقِبَةُ لِلْمُتَّقِيْنَ.

"That abode of the Hereafter – We shall give it to those who do not seek to exalt themselves in the land, nor to cause corruption. The blessed end is for those who fear." (Sūrah al-Qasas, 28: 63)

From this we can gauge how much importance Hadrat *rahimahullāh* laid on saving his people from pride, haughtiness and corruption.

I am now quoting the necessary aspects of Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Idrīs Kāndhlawī's *rahimahullāh* commentary to the above verse.

Lofty palaces in the Hereafter for those who are humble

The abode of the Hereafter which is hidden from the creation will be given to those who neither seek to exalt themselves in the land nor to cause corruption, as was sought by Qārūn. A blessed and good end is specifically for the pious. Self-exaltation, pride, and corruption of deeds are

from among the evil traits which are in absolute contradiction of piety, and their consequences are disastrous. For example, Pharaoh and Qārūn sought to exalt themselves and committed acts of corruption. Look at what happened to them! The Hereafter itself is very lofty and magnificent. Those who do not seek to exalt themselves in this world shall receive lofty palaces in the Hereafter. (*Maʿāriful Qur'ān*, Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Idrīs Kāndhlawī *rahimahullāh*)

Hadrat Muslihul Ummat's *rahimahullāh* humility, and his respect for teachers

Hadrat used to relate: "Some students in Dār al-ʿUlūm Deoband used to make certain objections to the teachers' explanations in the course of the lessons. We used to stop them and say to them: "Remain silent now, we will explain it to you later on." We used to say this so that it does not hurt the teachers in any way and does not cause them any ill feeling."

Hadrat *rahimahullāh* used to say: "Some of the teachers in Dār al-ʿUlūm used to refer to Shaykh ʿAbd al-Haqq Muhaddith Dehlawī *rahimahullāh* as Mullā Khurāsānī, by way of belittling him. The students began following suite. I disliked it because Hadrat Shaykh Muhaddith Dehlawī *rahimahullāh* also rendered many *Dīnī,* academic, reformatory and spiritual training services as were rendered by Mujaddid Alf Thānī *rahimahullāh*. He went to the extent of writing

letters of advice to ministers. He also wrote many valuable books which are well known."

He also used to say: "A very senior *'alim* who was a *hāfiz* of Hadīth said in one of his special assemblies: 'Nowhere did Rasūlullāh ﷺ explicitly order us to cry.' I remembered the Hadīth in which Rasūlullāh ﷺ said:

وابك على خطيئتك

"Cry over your sins."

"But, I remained silent out of respect for him."

I remember reading somewhere that Hadrat Maulānā Rashīd Ahmad Sāhib Gangohī *rahimahullāh* used to say: "We provide answers to the proofs of Imām Shāfi'ī *rahimahullāh* in order to clarify the proofs of Hanafī jurisprudence. But if Imām Shāfi'ī *rahimahullāh* were to come before us, we will not speak in his presence out of respect for him."

Note: Glory to Allāh! Such was the level of respect which our elders had for their elders. This is how they reached such lofty ranks. Inspiration is from Allāh ﷻ alone.

The advice of Hadrat Shāh 'Abd ar-Rahīm Sāhib Dehlawī *rahimahullāh*

Hadrat Shāh Walī Allāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* writes in his book, *Anfās al-'Ārifīn*:

“We gauge from his statements and practices that he disliked according superiority and preference to one *buzurg* over another, especially in a manner which focuses on his disparagement and denigration.”

Note: But today, people consider according superiority to their own shaykh and denigration of other *mashā’ikh* to be a necessary ingredient for their own perfection. Generally, even the *mashā’ikh* do not reprimand their *murīds* for doing this. Consequently, this sickness is becoming quite common. We seek refuge in Allāh ﷻ.

He also used to say: “People think it is very difficult to maintain good relations with parents, because no matter how well a person treats them, they are eligible for even more. But I consider it very easy because parents are overjoyed by the slightest affection which is showed to them. Out of their paternal love, they consider the smallest favours of their children to be very big favours.”

Note: It is definitely true; parents pardon the worst crimes of their children by the slightest respect which children show to them. Just as Allāh ﷻ pardons the sins of His servants by just a single cry of “Aah!”. In this regard, just as Allāh ﷻ showers His mercy on a person who says, *“Yā Rabbī* (O my Allāh)”, the parents’ hearts turn to wax by their children merely saying, “O my father, O my mother”, and paternal love gushes forth. Maulānā Rūm *rahimahullāh* said:

"A mother's breast does not gush forth with milk without the infant crying out. The lushness of a garden is dependent on the crying of the clouds."

If children perceived just one tenth of this, family ties and society will become pleasant.

The advice of Shaykh Muslihuddīn Saʿdī Shīrāzī *rahimahullāh*

Hadrat Shaykh Saʿdī *rahimahullāh* gives the following beneficial advice:

"Do not defame those who have passed away so that your pious name may be maintained."

I have a humble submission to make in this regard: We must be very particular about maintaining the honour and respect of the *ʿulamā'* – whether of the past, or our contemporary *ʿulamā'* – and we should not tolerate their denigration. If we are able to observe this, we will acquire the blessings of knowledge. There is a famous saying:

"It is through respect that a person becomes fortunate, and through disrespect he becomes a loser."

In like manner, those who are affiliated with *tasawwuf* and *sulūk* must be concerned about and make efforts to acquire *nisbat* (close affinity) with Allāh ﷻ. This is the object and purpose of all the *silsilahs* (spiritual lineages). The different

customs and habits are not the objects. Thus, we should never speak ill of the elders of the other *silsilahs*. Unfortunately, a time has come when let alone denigrating the elders of other *silsilahs*, people denigrate the elders of their own *silsilah.*

Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Ahmad Sāhib *rahimahullāh* used to relate an incident: While in the Haram Sharīf, a Qādirī (a person belonging to the *silsilah* of Shaykh ʿAbd al-Qādir Jīlānī *rahimahullāh*) said that Shaykh Muʿīn ad-Dīn Chishtī *rahimahullāh* was a *kāfir*. The Chishtī person responded by saying Hadrat ʿAbd al-Qādir Jīlānī *rahimahullāh* was a *kāfir*. Allāh forbid! Allāh forbid. How unfortunate for such impure words to be uttered in the Haram Sharīf.

Similarly, we should never say with regard to a certain *ʿālim*, reformer or spiritual guide that he did not make any *Dīnī* contribution, and someone else did. How do we know who did more and who did less? This decision will only be made in the absolutely just High Court of Allāh ﷿. The basis for a person's acceptance is not on the large number of his followers. Rather, it is based on the genuineness of his methodology, his integrity and his sincerity. And this is an internal condition known to none but Allāh ﷿. Allāh ﷿ says:

فَلاَ تُزَكُّوْا أَنْفُسَكُمْ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنِ اتَّقٰى

“So do not boast about your purity. He knows fully well who remained pious.” (Sūrah an-Najm, 53: 32)

Hadrat Fudayl ibn ʿIyād *rahimahullāh* said, you must not be deceived by the large number of those who are to be destroyed.

قال أبو علي الفضيل بن عياض ما معناه إلزم طرق الهدى ولا يضرك قلة السالكين، وإياك وطرق الضلالة ولا تغتروا بكثرة الهالكين. (الفتوحات الربانية على الأذكار النووية، ج٤، ص١٨٣)

Abū ʿAlī al-Fudayl ibn ʿIyād said: Adhere to the path of guidance, the small number of those treading this path will not harm you. Stay away from the paths of deviation and do not be deceived by the large number of those who are to be destroyed.

We learn from this that there is no consideration for large numbers. The *ahl-e-bidʿah* have always been in the majority in all eras. How, then, can a person follow them on the basis of their large numbers? We have to follow those who follow the Sunnah, even if they are small in number.

Hadrat Mujaddid Alf Thānī *rahimahullāh* has written somewhere in his *Maktūbāt* that Prophets عليهم السلام were also sent to India. But some of them had just one or two followers while others had none.

So can we doubt the integrity, sincerity, efforts, and physical and monetary sacrifices of the Prophets ﷷ? Never.

ذلك تقدير العزيز العليم

This is all solely by the decree of the all-powerful, all-knowing [Allāh ﷻ].

I now quote to you about the pure Sufis from the book *Tazkiyah wa Ihsān* of Hadrat Maulānā Abul Hasan Nadwī *rahimahullāh*. The Maulānā speaks specifically about the history of *tasawwuf* and its benefit. Moreover, he has gone to the extent of saying: Remove *tasawwuf* from the *ummah* and see what remains. And if one cannot have confidence in it, which other group is there which is worthy of confidence, and a source of pride!?

The purification of the soul and the culturing of character

The wide-ranging and firmly established system of *tazkiyah-e-nafs wa tahdhīb-e-akhlāq* (purification of the soul and culturing of character) assumed the form of an independent science and art in the latter centuries. Identifying the deceptions of the *nafs* and Satan, treating psychological and moral illnesses, explaining and arranging the means of acquiring a bond with Allāh ﷻ and internal affinity with Him - were all previously found in the Sharʿī words of *tazkiyah* and *ihsān*. In the latter centuries, they came to be

known as *tasawwuf*. This is a clear example of a collective inspiration from Allāh ﷻ. Gradually, experts in this field conveyed it to the level of *ijtihād*, and considered it to be a major service to *Dīn* and the jihād of the time. Through this system, Allāh ﷻ gave life to the dead gardens of the heart and soul, and provided a cure to those whose souls were sick.

These sincere Allāh-conscious *'ulamā'* and those who were trained by them spread to the distant corners of the world (such as India, Algeria, east India and the continent of Africa). Islam spread on a large scale and hundreds of thousands of people were guided. Their training gave rise to luminous personalities who, in their respective eras, blew the spirit of *īmān*, conviction, and good deeds in Muslim society. And they fulfilled commandeering roles on the battlefields of jihād on numerous occasions. Denying the benefits and services of this group can only be done by a person who has not studied Islamic history, or a person whose eyes are covered with a bandage of bigotry.

In their definition of a *Hadīth-e-Mutawātir* and its absoluteness in Islamic law, those who laid down the principles of Hadīth state: "In every era, such a large number of people related a Hadīth causing a sound mind and human nature to refuse to accept that such a large number of people could have unanimously fabricated it, and that it was the result of a conspiracy."

Even a cursory study of history makes it clear that from the second century till now, a large number of devoted servants of every era and every country – with total continuity and without exception – adopted this way, invited to it, benefited from it, conveyed its benefit to others, and spent their entire lives occupied in its proliferation. They had full conviction and confidence in the genuineness and benefit of this system. They were the quintessence of their society. They surpassed and outshone their contemporaries not only in their integrity, sincerity, selflessness, pure souls and internal righteousness; but also in their knowledge of the Qur'ān and Sunnah, love for the Sunnah, and abhorrence for *bidʿah*.

It is possible and not far-fetched for one or two or a few people to misunderstand, or to be targets of a conspiracy. But to see hundreds of thousands of people at the forefront of knowledge and practice to remain for centuries in continuous error, to persist in this error, to call towards it, and to remain steadfast on it with full determination and fortitude; is both absurd and abnormal. Furthermore, it is established with *tawātur* (continuity) that hundreds of thousands of people were guided by them, derived benefit from them, and reached the highest pinnacles of internal and spiritual excellences through their efforts. It is impossible to deny this. It is both rationally and normally impossible for this group of righteous and sincere people to have continuously remained in error despite their

different times and climes, and for Allāh ﷻ - who is all-merciful, all-wise, the absolute guide, and whose promise is:

وَالَّذِيْنَ جَاهَدُوْا فِيْنَا لَنَهْدِيَنَّهُمْ سُبُلَنَا، وَإِنَّ اللهَ لَمَعَ الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ

"Those who strove in Our cause – We shall show them Our paths. Surely Allāh is with the righteous." (Sūrah al-ʿAnkabūt, 29: 69)

not to expose their wrong, and not to guide them. Remove each personality from this righteous and sincere group from Islamic history – each of whom was the best flower of his era, a lighthouse, and a source of pride for the human race – and see what remains. If one cannot have confidence in them, which other group is there which is worthy of confidence, and a source of pride!? (*Tazkiyah wa Ihsān*, p. 31)

Hadrat Jaʿfar Sādiq *rahimahullāh* on the issue of purification of the soul

Hadrat Jaʿfar Sādiq *rahimahullāh* made the following famous statement:

"O my human brother! On what basis are you vexing your pride!? Your beginning was from a drop of impure liquid [sperm], and you are destined to be reduced to an impure corpse. Now do not adulterate the purity of your soul in the

intervening period." (*Mukarrarāt Qur'ān,*[1] Maulānā ʿAbdullāh ʿAbbās S̲āh̲ib, p. 107)

Note: Glory to Allāh! What worthy words of advice by Sayyidunā H̲ad̲rat Jaʿfar S̲ādiq *rah̲imahullāh*. This [purification of the soul] is one of the important objectives behind the revelation of the Qur'ān and the commissioning of Rasūlullāh ﷺ as a Prophet of Allāh ﷻ. After explaining the essence of man's beginning and his destiny, he drew our attention to setting right the heart and purifying the soul. May Allāh ﷻ reward him.

We make *duʿā'* to Allāh ﷻ to inspire us with the ability to understand the nature of our life and its actual purpose. Āmīn.

A request and plea

I request the reader with all my heart and absolute sincerity to make *duʿā'* for this worthless person (whose heart is black with sins and is a target of harms from friends and relatives – which I fully deserve) for Allāh ﷻ to rectify me, and to pardon me for my shortcomings in fulfilling His rights and the rights of my fellow humans. If anyone has harmed me in any way, I pardon him, and make *duʿā'* to Allāh ﷻ to pardon him as well. Āmīn.

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[1] This is a very beneficial and enlightening book which *ʿulamā'* ought to study. (Muh̲ammad Qamar az-Zamān)

An essential clarification

I consider it appropriate to quote an essential clarification which was undertaken by Hakīm al-Ummat Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* and titled *al-ʿUdhr wan Nadhr* (which was quoted previously):

"If I pardon a person for his mistake and accept his apology, it is not necessary that I maintain special friendship with him. In some cases, one is unable to do this, and in other cases, we have experienced that there is no expediency in it. but one thing is essential, if we meet coincidentally, we must offer *salām* to each other. If one were to engage in any essential conversation, the other should give an appropriate reply even if it is brief. If the conversation becomes more than necessary, and it could cause an informality, one should apologize in a soft manner."

Rasūlullāh ﷺ pardoned Hadrat Wahshī ؓ when the latter embraced Islam. Despite this, Rasūlullāh ﷺ excused himself from having to look at him again.

The story of Hadrat Wahshī ؓ

After embracing Islam, Wahshī ؓ presented himself before Rasūlullāh ﷺ. Rasūlullāh ﷺ said to him: "If possible, I would like you to hide your face from me." Consequently, he did not go before Rasūlullāh ﷺ for the rest of his life, and did not show him his face.

Two important points which are worthy of emulation are learnt from this incident: (1) At times, there is no Sharʽī excuse for a matter, but there is a natural excuse which makes it difficult to practise on. After Hadrat Wahshī رضي الله عنه embraced Islam, all his sins were automatically pardoned by Allāh سبحانه وتعالى. Consequently, all his sins were also wiped off from Rasūlullāh's ﷺ pure heart. Despite this, Rasūlullāh ﷺ asked him not to come in front of him because of his natural love for his uncle, Hadrat Hamzah رضي الله عنه. Rasūlullāh ﷺ did this so that he is not overcome by grief and sorrow whenever he sees Hadrat Wahshī رضي الله عنه.

(2) If a spiritual mentor, shaykh, teacher, leader, imām, etc. asks a *tālib* (seeker) to do something which is against his temperament, he must accept it without any complaint, consider it to be for his own good, and in emulation of the Sharīʽah. Without doubt, although Hadrat Wahshī رضي الله عنه had earned the honour of being a Sahābī even by a single moment's companionship with Rasūlullāh ﷺ - an honour which is thousands of times better than the rank of *qutb* – after hearing the clear order of Rasūlullāh ﷺ and despite having deep love for him, exercising patience over this will certainly earn him honour and reverence – *inshā Allāh.*

Incidents wherein Rasūlullāh ﷺ did not pardon

You have observed incidents containing the seeking of pardon and pardoning. Now observe some incidents where people were not pardoned.

Rasūlullāh ﷺ does not pardon a poet who ridiculed him

لا يلدغ المؤمن من جحر واحد مرتين (بخاري شريف، ج٢، ص٩٠٥)

"A believer does not fall in the same whole twice." [He does not commit the same mistake twice].

'Allāmah 'Abd al-'Azīz Khaulī Misrī *rahimahullāh* provided some valuable and enlightening points in his commentary to the above Hadīth. The gist of which is:

Abū 'Uzzah, the poet, was taken a prisoner after the battle of Badr. When Rasūlullāh ﷺ was informed of his family, poverty and destitution, he felt sorry for him and released him without any ransom. A promise was taken from him not to make any derogatory statements against Rasūlullāh ﷺ, but he did not desist. He was eventually brought as a prisoner after the battle of Uhud. He asked to be released a second time. But Rasūlullāh ﷺ refused and said: "You will return to Makkah and say: 'I mocked at Muhammad [ﷺ] twice, deceived him twice, and was able to get released.'" Rasūlullāh ﷺ then ordered for him to be killed, and said:

لا يلدغ المؤمن من جحر واحد مرتين (بخاري شريف، ج٢، ص٩٠٥)

"A believer does not fall in the same whole twice." [He does not commit the same mistake twice].

We learn from this that a believer is always awake and vigilant, and takes a lesson from past incidents. He remains on his guard in future matters through the experience which he gained. He interacts with friends and foes in accordance with the experience which he gained. If he perceives the need for harshness and strictness, he opts for them, and is correct in opting for it. Allāh ﷻ ordered the Prophet of Mercy [Rasūlullāh ﷺ] to be harsh against the hypocrites.

'Allāmah 'Abd al-'Azīz Khaulī Misrī *rahimahullāh* writes further on, the gist of which is:

You have learnt from this Hadīth that *īmān* and heedlessness cannot combine at one and the same time. *Īmān* demands caution and lowering one's self, and not a "know-all" heedlessness.

Those who do not take a lesson from past incidents and do not take benefit from past experiences, *īmān* has not yet reached the stage of perfection in their hearts even if they are particular about customary acts of worship. (*al-Adab an-Nabawī*, p. 96)

Note: In the light of the above Hadīth, both the masses and the rulers have to be religiously and politically watchful to protect themselves against

the plots and ruses of the enemies of Islam so that they are not caught by their false promises and incorrect policies.

Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* possessed the qualities of rectitude and righteousness. In like manner, he was also embellished with the qualities of vigilance and caution. He would therefore teach his associates things of understanding and intelligence. He would explain the importance of these things with earnestness so that they may be able to rectify themselves thoroughly, and be able to treat friends and foes appropriately.

Rasūlullāh ﷺ does not pardon Muhlim

Muhlim ibn Juthāmah killed ʿĀmir in a battle. When Muhlim was about to attack ʿĀmir, the latter said *as-salāmu ʿalaykum* to him. There was some ill-feeling between Muhlim and ʿĀmir since pre-Islamic times. Muhlim found this to be an ideal opportunity and killed ʿĀmir with an arrow despite his saying *as-salāmu ʿalaykum* to him.

The matter was presented before Rasūlullāh ﷺ, Muhlim came to him and asked him to pardon him his mistake. This was an issue of killing an innocent Muslim not for the sake of truth, but because of a personal dispute. Rasūlullāh ﷺ said to Muhlim:

لا غفر الله لك

“May Allāh not forgive you.”

On seeing Rasūlullāh’s ﷺ displeasure, Muhlim stood up with tears flowing from his eyes:

وهو يلتقي دموعه ببرديه

“He left while wiping his tears with the corners of his upper garment.”

Muhlim passed away within seven days of the incident. The people buried him according to Islamic rites but:

فلفته الأرض

“the earth cast his body out.”

The Sahābah ﵃ informed Rasūlullāh ﷺ about it, and he said:

الأرض تقبل من هو شر من صاحبكم ولكن الله أراد أن يعظكم

“The earth accepted worse people than him [in the past], but Allāh ﷻ did this because He wants to advise and admonish you.”

Rasūlullāh ﷺ then ordered for his body to be thrown from the top of a mountain and rocks to be hurled at him.

Even some pious elders did not pardon

You read the stories of how the pious elders sought pardon from those who had claims over them, and accepted the apologies of those who erred. Now read some of their stories in which they did not pardon the mistakes of certain disrespectful and audacious persons, remained displeased with such wretched fellows for the rest of their lives, and expressed their displeasure to them with stern words.

Hadrat Maulānā Fadlur Rahmān *rahimahullāh* does not pardon his son

I heard the following story on several occasions from H̲ad̲rat Mus̲lih̲ul Ummat Maulānā Shāh Was̲īyyullāh S̲āh̲ib *rah̲imahullāh*.

The villagers expelled H̲ad̲rat Maulānā Fad̲lur Rah̲mān Ganj Murādābādī *rah̲imahullāh* with utter disrespect from their village. They were whistling and mocking at him while they did this. And so, he went and settled down in Ganj Murādābād. It was extremely unfortunate and sad that his son from his first wife had joined the audacious whistlers who drove him out of his village.

Obviously, such audacity from outsiders would cause a person much pain and grief. But for one's own son to commit such a hard-hearted and cruel act would most certainly render a father's heart to bits. Whenever the Maulānā

rahimahullāh would see his son, he would say: “Remove this cursed one from here.” But Hadrat’s second wife would call him from the window which faced the street, give him something without Hadrat knowing about it, and send him off.

The Maulānā *rahimahullāh* must have experienced several disturbing and heart-rending incidents in his life on account of which Allāh’s ﷾ mercy was showered on him, and he was bestowed with the honour of proximity to and acceptance by Allāh ﷾. Senior *ʿulamā’* of his time acknowledged his *wilāyat* (close friendship with Allāh ﷾). Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad ʿAlī Maungerī *rahimahullāh*, Hadrat Maulānā ʿAbd al-Karīm Sāhib *rahimahullāh* and Hadrat Hakīm Badr ʿAlī Sāhib Rāi Barelwī *rahimahullāh* were from among his *khulafā’*. Although Hadrat Hakīm al-Ummat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* had pledged *bayʿah* to Hadrat Hājī Imdādullāh Sāhib Muhājir Makkī Chishtī *rahimahullāh*, he went on two occasions from Kānpūr to Ganj Murādābād to meet Hadrat Maulānā Fadlur Rahmān Sāhib Naqshbandī *rahimahullāh*. Hadrat Hakīm al-Ummat *rahimahullāh* described his visits in a book titled *Nayl al-Murād fī Safari Ganj Murādābād* (*Acquisition of my purpose in the journey to Ganj Murādābād*).

As for the incident concerning the disrespect and audaciousness of Hadrat Maulānā Shāh Fadl ar-Rahmān Sāhib’s *rahimahullāh* son, it occurred in

an era when such incidents were unheard of. When we hear of incidents of this nature today, we are not surprised by them. In fact, we consider them to be normal. How sad over man's condition!

Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* used to relate a similar incident to us so that we may learn a lesson and take admonition from it. A learned person was living in the *khānqāh* of Thānabhawan. He used to refer to Hadrat Hakīm al-Ummat Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* with lofty titles like "the *Qutb* of the era" and other similar titles. But when degeneration crept into his temperament, he said that Hadrat Hakīm al-Ummat *rahimahullāh* was a Christian. We seek refuge in Allāh ﷾ from such statements.

This must have caused obvious pain to Hadrat Maulānā *rahimahullāh*, and thus, he used to refer to him as a *mūdhī murīd* (a harmful *murīd*), and stopped him from living in the *khānqāh*.

I also heard the following story from Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh*: Hadrat Hājī Imdādullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* used to live in a certain house during his stay in Makkah al-Mukarramah. A doctor lived next door, and when he opened a certain window of his, it caused Hadrat Hājī Sāhib's *rahimahullāh* house to become exposed [to passers by]. Hadrat Hājī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* asked him on several occasions to stop opening that window but he

refused. Some people advised Hadrat Hājī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* to open a case in the court so that he may desist. Hadrat replied: “We do not open cases in these superficial courts. Yes, we have already opened a case in the real court [of Allāh ﷾].”

Obviously, this must have caused real pain and discomfort to Hadrat Hājī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* which caused him to make *du‘ā’* in the court of Allāh ﷾.

Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* used to relate this story as well: A certain *buzurg* was invited by one of his *murīds* and he went to have a meal there. But the *buzurg* perceived inattention towards him and disregard for him on the part of the *murīd*. His self-respect caused him to leave the *murīd’s* house without eating anything.

Note: Remember! The *buzurg’s* displeasure at his *murīd’s* attitude was not baseless. Rather, it was based on *Dīnī* self-respect which was essential. Unfortunately, we treat our elders in similar fashion without even bothering about it. How sad over man’s condition!

I read the following incident in a certain book: A father said to his son: “Rasūlullāh ﷺ used to like bottle gourd (*dodhī*).” The son replied: “Bottle gourd is a filthy thing.” The father who was a true lover of Rasūlullāh ﷺ could not tolerate such disrespect from his son. He unsheathed his sword

and chopped off his son's head. In so doing, he gave preference to the greatness of Rasūlullāh's ﷺ Sunnah over his own beloved son.

Note: Glory to Allāh! This is what you call self-respect on the basis of *Dīn* and *īmān*. Amīr al-Mu'minīn Hadrat ʿUmar ؓ killed a hypocrite on one occasion because the latter showed disrespect to Rasūlullāh ﷺ.

There are many such stories related in different books. These few stories are sufficient to serve as lessons and admonitions. May Allāh ﷻ protect us against disrespect and audaciousness, and safeguard us against the disastrous consequences of such behaviour. May Allāh ﷻ inspire us all. Āmīn.

The curses of Hadrat Saʿd ibn Abī Waqqās ؓ

Hadrat Maulānā Abū Tāhir Muhammad Is-hāq Khān Sāhib *rahimahullāh* wrote a book titled, *Tuhfatul ʿulūm wal hikam bi sharh khamsīn min jawāmiʿ al-kalim*, popularly known as *The gift of knowledge and wisdom*. In it he has a chapter titled, "The essential need to save one's self from the curses of the *Ahlullāh*", in which he quotes a few incidents relating to the curses of Hadrat Saʿd ibn Abī Waqqās ؓ. I am quoting these for additional insight. Hadrat Muslihul Ummat Maulānā Shāh Wasīyyullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* would also relate some of them from other books to show that the pious elders did not only possess

the qualities of humility, servitude, and making pious *duʿā's*. Instead, they expressed their displeasure and curses against some people.

The essential need to save one's self from the curses of the *Ahlullāh*

When we know how readily the *duʿā's* of Allāh's pious servants are accepted, it becomes essential to safeguard ourselves from their curses. If not, the effects and consequences of their curses are very serious and destructive. We seek refuge in Allāh ﷻ.

It is related that a person slandered Hadrat Saʿd ibn Abī Waqqās رضي الله عنه, so he made the following *duʿā'* against him:

أللهم إن كان كاذبا فأعم بصره وأطل عمره وعرّضه للفتن (جامع العلوم والحكم، ص٣٢١).

"O Allāh! If this person is lying [in his slander], make him blind, lengthen his life, and make him a target for trials and tribulations.

The *duʿā'* was accepted. The person was given a long life, and he would spend his time wandering in the alleys where he would be shoved about in a humiliating way. He would say to the people:

شيخ كبير مفتون أصابته دعوة سعد

"I am an old man who is afflicted by tribulations, against whom the *duʿā'* of Saʿd fell."

A person hurled vulgarities against Hadrat ʿAlī in the presence of Hadrat Saʿd, who then made *duʿā'* against this person. Before he could get up from where he was seated, an enraged camel attacked him and tore him up. We seek refuge in Allāh.

The wife of Saʿīd ibn Zayd disputed with him with regard to the ownership of a certain property, and accused him of usurping it. He made this *duʿā'* against her:

أللهم إن كانت كاذبة فأعم بصرها، واقتلها في أرضها

"O Allāh! If she is lying, make her blind and kill her in her land."

The *duʿā'* was accepted; the woman became blind, and she died by falling into a well which was on her property.

A few poems depicting the servitude of the pious elders

I now quote a few comprehensive and poignant poems of Shaykh Saʿdī Shīrāzī *rahimahullāh*:

"I saw a beggar at the door of the Kaʿbah who was crying profusely and saying: 'O Allāh! I am not asking You to accept my acts of obedience and

worship. My only request is for you to draw a line of pardon over my sins.'"

"O Allāh! O the One who is dearest to me! I have hope in Your kindness and generosity of forgiving this bankrupt person who has no possessions [i.e. no good deeds]. I have come to You with nothing but hope. O Allāh! Do not cause me to lose hope in Your pardon."

I now quote a few lines of Hadrat ʿAllāmah Sayyid Sulaymān Nadwī *rahimahullāh* which certainly depict his lofty conditions, and which are testimonies to the pain and yearning of his heart.

"May my heart be blessed with the ability to melt. May my condition be bestowed with burning passion. I am making this *duʿā'* with absolute respect in the court of the all-independent [Allāh]. Bless me with eyes which are able to cry over the heart which became black through sins. Let these tears constantly wash my heart in my hours of solitude and privacy."

Another *duʿā'* was taught to me by Hadrat Maulānā Hakīm Muhammad Masʿūd Sāhib Ajmerī *rahimahullāh*:

"I repented several times for my sins, but I broke my repentance on each occasion. O Allāh! You show Your kindness again and again, but I have nothing but evil and sin. Although my sinfulness is not worthy of pardon, I beg You to open Your

fountains of mercy, and take my grey hairs [old age] into consideration.”

From the sayings and supplications of these pious elders, we learn quite well that the path to reach Allāh ﷾ is to cast our gazes away from our merits, and to acknowledge our errors and mistakes.

Hadrat Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه used to take hold of his tongue in privacy and say: “This has conveyed us towards destruction.”

This was the practice of Hadrat Khalīfah Sayyidunā Abū Bakr Siddīq رضي الله عنه to reprimand his self in solitude. We can gauge how much importance he attached to purification of the soul and internal reformation.

ʿĀrif Rūmī *rahimahullāh* advises the same thing:

“The person who recognized the defects of his soul has in fact run speedily towards his perfection.”

On the other hand, the person who is proud and haughty over his achievements will never advance towards perfection. In fact, he will be retrogressing. Maulānā Rūmī *rahimahullāh* conveys this as follows:

“He is not progressing towards Allāh ﷾ because he considers himself to be perfect.”

The fundamental and essential basis for reformation in the Ṯarīqah is for a person to abandon false claims.

I now take the opportunity of quoting some of Rasūlullāh’s ﷺ *duʿā’s* which are very effective and also display his humility and servitude. May Allāh ﷻ enable us to make these *duʿā’s* with absolute sincerity and bless us with acceptance. Āmīn. This is most certainly easy for Allāh ﷻ.

اَللّٰهُمَّ اغْسِلْ خَطَايَايَ بِمَآءِ الثَّلْجِ وَالْبَرَدِ، وَنَقِّ قَلْبِيْ مِنَ الْخَطَايَا كَمَا يُنَقَّى الثَّوْبُ الاَبْيَضُ مِنَ الدَّنَسِ. وَبَاعِدْ بَيْنِيْ وَبَيْنَ خَطَايَايَ كَمَا بَاعَدْتَّ بَيْنَ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ. (مشكوة شريف)

O Allāh! Wash away my sins with ice water and hail-stones, and purify my heart from sins just as a white cloth is purified from dirt. Create a great distance between me and my sins just as You caused a great distance between east and west

اَللّٰهُمَّ آتِ نَفْسِيْ تَقْوٰهَا، وَزَكِّهَآ اَنْتَ خَيْرُ مَنْ زَكّٰهَآ، اَنْتَ وَلِيُّهَا وَمَوْلاَهَا. (بخاري ومسلم)

O Allāh! Give to my soul its piety and purify it – You alone are the best to purify it, You alone are its owner and master.

اِنَّا نَسْاَلُكَ مِنْ خَيْرِ مَا سَاَلَكَ مِنْهُ نَبِيُّكَ مُحَمَّدٌ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. (ترمذي عن أمامة)

We ask You for all the good which Your Prophet, Mu<u>h</u>ammad ﷺ, had asked You.

ربنا تقبل منا إنك أنت السميع العليم، وصلى الله تعالى على خير خلقه سيدنا محمد وعلى آله وأصحابه أجمعين، برحمتك يا أرحم الراحمين.

Mu<u>h</u>ammad Qamar az-Zamān Ilāhābādī, *may Allāh protect him*
Idārah Maʿārif Mu<u>s</u>li<u>h</u>ul Ummat *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh*
64/30 D Block, Karelī, Ilāhābād
29 Mu<u>h</u>arram al-<u>H</u>arām 1429 A.H./8 February 2008

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May Allāh ﷻ accept this service and make it a means of my salvation in this world and in the Hereafter.

I request the reader to inform me of any mistakes, typographical errors, etc. in this translation. Constructive criticism and suggestions on how to improve this work are most welcome. I can be contacted via e-mail: maulanamahomedy@gmail.com

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